New INDIVIDUALIST Review

IS A FREE SOCIETY STABLE?
MILTON FRIEDMAN

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE REPUBLICAN PARTY
HOWARD BUFFETT

H. L. MENCKEN: THE JOYOUS LIBERTARIAN
MURRAY N. ROTHBARD

CONSERVATIVES, CITIES, AND MRS. JACOBS
JOHN WEICHER

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NEW INDIVIDUALIST REVIEW

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Is a Free Society Stable?

MILTON FRIEDMAN

THERE IS A STRONG TENDENCY for all of us to regard what is as if it were the "natural" or "normal" state of affairs, to lack perspective because of the tyranny of the status quo. It is, therefore, well, from time to time, to make a deliberate effort to look at things in a broader context. In such a context anything approaching a free society is an exceedingly rare event. Only during short intervals in man's recorded history has there been anything approaching what we would call a free society in existence over any appreciable part of the globe. And even during such intervals, as at the moment, the greater part of mankind has lived under regimes that could by no stretch of the imagination be called free.

This casual empirical observation raises the question whether a free society may not be a system in unstable equilibrium. If one were to take a purely historical point of view, one would have to say that the "normal," in the sense of average, state of mankind is a state of tyranny and despotism. Perhaps this is the equilibrium state of society that tends to arise in the relation of man to his fellows. Perhaps highly special circumstances must exist to render a free society possible. And perhaps these special circumstances, the existence of which account for the rare episodes of freedom, are themselves by their nature transitory, so that the kind of society we all of us believe in is highly unlikely to be maintained, even if once attained.

This problem has, of course, been extensively discussed in the literature. In his great book, *Lectures on Law and Public Opinion in the Nineteenth Century*, written at the end of the nineteenth century, A. V. Dicey discusses a very similar question. How was it, he asks, that toward the end of the nineteenth century there seemed to be a shift in English public opinion away from the doctrine of liberalism and toward collectivism, even though just prior to the shift, individualism and *laisser-faire* were at something like their high tide, seemed to have captured English public opinion, and seemed to be producing the results that their proponents had promised in the form of an expansion of economic activity, a rise in the standard of life, and the like?

As you may recall, Dicey dates the change in public opinion in Britain away from individualism and toward collectivism at about 1870-90. Dicey answers his question by essentially reversing it, saying that in its original form, it may be a foolish question. Perhaps the relevant question is not why people turned away from individualism toward collectivism, but how they were induced to accept the queer notion of individualism in the first place. The argument for a free society, he goes on to say, is a very subtle and sophisticated argument. At every point, it depends on the indirect rather than the direct effect of the policy followed.

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If one is concerned to remedy clear evils in a society, as everyone is, the natural reaction is to say, "let's do something about it," and the "us" in this statement will in a large number of cases be translated into the "government," so the natural reaction is to pass a law. The argument that maybe the attempt to correct this particular evil by extending the hand of the government will have indirect effects whose aggregate consequences may be far worse than any direct benefits that flow from the action taken is, after all, a rather sophisticated argument. And yet, this is the kind of argument that underlies a belief in a free or *laisser-faire* society.

If you look at each evil as it arises, in and of itself, there will almost always tend to be strong pressures to do something about it. This will be so because the direct effects are clear and obvious while the indirect effects are remote and devious and because there tends to be a concentrated group of people who have strong interests in favor of a particular measure whereas the opponents, like the indirect effects of the measure, are diffused. One can cite example after example along this line. Indeed, I think it is true that most crude fallacies about economic policies derive from neglecting the indirect effects of the policies followed.

The tariff is one example. The benefits that are alleged to flow from a tariff are clear and obvious. If a tariff is imposed, a specified group of people, whose names can almost be listed, seem to be benefited in the first instance. The harm that is wrought by the tariff is borne by people whose names one does not know and who are unlikely themselves to know that they are or will be harmed. The tariff does most harm to people who have special capacities for producing the exports that would pay for the goods that would be imported in the absence of a tariff. With a tariff in effect, the potential export industry may never exist and no one will ever know that he might have been employed in it or who would have been. The indirect harm to consumers via a more inefficient allocation of resources and higher prices for the resulting products are spread even more thinly through the society. Thus the case for a tariff seems quite clear on first glance. And this is true in case after case.

This natural tendency to engage in state action in specific instances can, it would seem, and this is Dicey's argument, be offset only by a widespread general acceptance of a philosophy of non-interference, by a general presumption against undertaking any one of a large class of actions. And, says Dicey, what is really amazing and surprising is that for so long a period as a few decades, sufficiently widespread public opinion developed in Britian in favor of the general principle of non-intervention and *laisser-faire* as to overcome the natural tendency to pass a law for the particular cases. As soon as this general presumption weakened, it meant the emergence of a climate of opinion in favor of specific government intervention.

Dicey's argument is enormously strengthened by an asymmetry between a shift toward individualism and a shift away from it. In the first place, there is what I have called the tyranny of the status quo. Anyone who wants to see how strong that tyranny is can do no better, I believe, than to read Dicey's book now. On reading it, he will discover how extreme and extensive a collectivist he is, as judged by the kinds of standards for governmental action that seemed obvious and appropriate to Dicey when he wrote his lectures. In discussing issues of this kind, the tendency always is to take *what is* for granted, to assume that it is perfectly all right and reasonable, and that the problem to argue about is the next step. This tends to mean that movements in any one direction are difficult to reverse. A second source of asymmetry is the general dilemma that faces the liberal — tolerance of the intolerant. The belief in individualism includes the belief in tolerating the intolerant. It includes the belief that the society is only worth defending if it is one in which we resort to persuasion rather than to force and in which we defend freedom of discussion on the part of those who would undermine the system itself. If one departs

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from a free society, the people in power in a collectivist society will not hesitate to use force to keep it from being changed. Under such circumstances, it is more difficult to achieve a revolution that would convert a totalitarian or collectivist society into an individualist society than it is to do the reverse. From the point of view of the forces that may work in the direction of rendering a free society an unstable system, this is certainly one of the most important that strengthens Dicey's general argument.

PERHAPS THE MOST FAMOUS argument alleging the instability of a free enterprise or capitalist society is the Marxian. Marx argued that there were inherent historical tendencies within a capitalist society that would tend to lead to its destruction. As you know, he predicted that as it developed, capitalism would produce a division of society into sharp classes, the impoverishment of the masses, the despoilment of the middle classes, and a declining rate of profit. He predicted that the combined result would be a class struggle in which the class of the "expropriated" or the proletarian class would assume power.

Marx's analysis is at least in part to be regarded as a scientific analysis attempting to derive hypotheses that could be used to predict consequences that were likely to occur. His predictions have uniformly been wrong; none of the major consequences that he predicted has in fact occurred. Instead of a widening split among classes, there has tended to be a reduction of class barriers. Instead of a despoilment of the middle class, there has tended to be, if anything, an increase in the middle class relative to the extremes. Instead of the impoverishment of the masses, there has been the largest rise in the standard of life of the masses that history has ever seen. We must therefore reject his theory as having been disproved.

The lack of validity of Marx's theory does not mean that it has been unimportant. It had the enormous importance of leading many, if not a majority, of the intellectual and ruling classes to regard tendencies of the kind he predicted as inevitable, thereby leading them to interpret what did go on in different terms than they otherwise would. Perhaps the most striking example has been the extent to which intellectuals, and people in general, have taken it for granted that the development of a capitalist society has meant an increased concentration of industrial power and an increase in the degree of monopoly. Though this view has largely reflected a confusion between changes in absolute size and changes in relative size, in part also, I think, it was produced by the fact that this was something they were told by Marx to look for. I don't mean to attribute this view solely to the Marxian influence. But I think that in this and other instances, the Marxian argument has indirectly affected the patterns of thinking of a great many people including many who would regard themselves as strongly anti-Marxian. Indeed, in many ways, the ideas have been most potent when they have lost their labels. In this way, Marx's ideas had an enormous intellectual importance, even though his scientific analysis and predictions have all been contradicted by experience.

In more recent times, Joseph Schumpeter has offered a more subtle and intellectually more satisfactory defense of essentially the Marxian conclusion. Schumpeter's attitude toward Marx is rather interesting. He demonstrates that Marx was wrong in every separate particular, yet proceeds both to accept the major import of his conclusions and to argue that Marx was a very great man. Whereas Marx's view was that capitalism would destroy itself by its failure, Schumpeter's view was that capitalism would destroy itself by its success. Schumpeter believed that large scale enterprises and monopoly have real advantages in promoting technological progress and growth and that these advantages would give them a competitive edge in the economic struggle. The success of capitalism would therefore, he argued, be associated with a growth of very large enterprises, and with the spread of something like semi-monopoly

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over the industrial scene. In its turn, he thought that this development would tend to convert businessmen into bureaucrats. Large organizations have much in common whether they are governmental or private. They inevitably, he believed, produced an increasing separation between the ultimate owners of the enterprises and the individuals who were in positions of importance in managing the enterprises. Such individuals are induced to place high values upon technical performance and to become adaptable to a kind of civil-service socialist organization of society. In addition, this process would create the kind of skills in the managerial elite that would be necessary in order to have a collectivist or governmentally controlled society. The development of this bureaucratic elite with its tendency to place greater and greater emphasis on security and stability and to accept centralized control would tend, he believed, to have the effect of establishing a climate of opinion highly favorable to a shift to an explicitly socialized and centralized state.

The view that Schumpeter expressed has much in common with what Burnham labelled a managerial revolution although the two are not by any means the same. There is also much in common between Schumpeter's analysis and the distinction that Veblen drew in his analysis of the price system between the roles of entrepreneurs and engineers, between "business" and "industry." There are also large differences. Veblen saw the engineer as the productive force in the society, the entrepreneur as the destructive force. Schumpeter, if anything, saw matters the other way. He saw the entrepreneur as the creative force in society, and the engineer as simply his handmaiden. But I think there is much in common between the two analyses with respect to the belief that power would tend to shift from the one to the other.

For myself, I must confess that while I find Schumpeter's analysis intriguing and intellectually fascinating, I cannot accept his thesis. It seems to me to reflect in large part a widespread bias that emphasizes the large and few as opposed to the small and numerous, a tendency to see the merits of scale and not to recognize the merits of large numbers of separate people working in diverse activities. In any event, so far as one can judge, there has been no striking tendency in experience toward an increasing concentration of economic activity in large bureaucratic private enterprises. Some enormous enterprises have of course arisen. But there has also been a very rapid growth in small enterprises. What has happened in this country at least is that the large enterprises have tended to be concentrated in communication and manufacturing. These industries have tended to account for a roughly constant proportion of total economic activity. Small enterprises have tended to be concentrated in agriculture and services. Agriculture has declined in importance and in the number of enterprises, while the service industries have grown in both. If one leaves government aside, as Schumpeter's thesis requires one to do, so far as one can judge from the evidence, there seems to have been no particularly consistent tendency for the fraction of economic activity which is carried on in any given percentage of the enterprises to have grown. What has happened is that small enterprises and big enterprises have both grown in scale so what we now call a small enterprise may be large by some earlier standard. However, the thesis that Schumpeter developed is certainly sophisticated and subtle and deserves serious attention.

THERE IS ANOTHER DIRECTION, it seems to me, in which there is a different kind of a tendency for capitalism to undermine itself by its own success. The tendency I have in mind can probably best be brought out by the experience of Great Britain — Great Britain tends to provide the best laboratory for many of these forces. It has to do with the attitude of the public at large toward law and toward law obedience. Britain has a wide and deserved reputation for the extraordinary obedience of its people to the law. It has not always been so. At the turn of the nine-

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teenth century, and earlier, the British had a very different reputation as a nation of people who would obey no law, or almost no law, a nation of smugglers, a nation in which corruption and inefficiency was rife, and in which one could not get very much done through governmental channels.

Indeed, one of the factors that led Bentham and the Utilitarians toward *laisser-faire,* and this is a view that is also expressed by Dicey, was the self-evident truth that if you wanted to get evils corrected, you could not expect to do so through the government of the time. The government was corrupt and inefficient. It was clearly oppressive. It was something that had to be gotten out of the way as a first step to reform. The fundamental philosophy of the Utilitarians, or any philosophy that puts its emphasis on some kind of a sum of utilities, however loose may be the expression, does not lead to *laisser-faire* in principle. It leads to whatever kind of organization of economic activity is thought to produce results which are regarded as good in the sense of adding to the sum total of utilities. I think the major reason why the Utilitarians tended to be in favor of *laisser-faire* was the obvious fact that government was incompetent to perform any of the tasks they wanted to see performed.

Whatever the reason for its appeal, the adoption of *laisser-faire* had some important consequences. Once *laisser-faire* was adopted, the economic incentive for corruption was largely removed. After all, if governmental officials had no favors to grant, there was no need to bribe them. And if there was nothing to be gained from government, it could hardly be a source of corruption. Moreover, the laws that were left were for the most part, and again I am oversimplifying and exaggerating, laws that were widely accepted as proper and desirable; laws against theft, robbery, murder, etc. This is in sharp contrast to a situation in which the legislative structure designates as crimes what people individually do not regard as crimes or makes it illegal for people to do what seems to them the sensible thing. The latter situation tends to reduce respect for the law. One of the unintended and indirect effects of *laisser-faire* was thus to establish a climate in Britain of a much greater degree of obedience and respect for the law than had existed earlier. Probably there were other forces at work in this development but I believe that the establishment of *laisser-faire* laid the groundwork for a reform in the civil service in the latter part of the century — the establishment of a civil service chosen on the basis of examinations and merit and of professional competence. You could get that kind of development because the incentives to seek such places for purposes of exerting "improper" influence were greatly reduced when government had few favors to confer.

In these ways, the development of *laisser-faire* laid the groundwork for a widespread respect for the law, on the one hand, and a relatively incorrupt, honest, and efficient civil service on the other, both of which are essential preconditions for the operation of a collectivist society. In order for a collectivist society to operate, the people must obey the laws and there must be a civil service that can and will carry out the laws. The success of capitalism established these preconditions for a movement in the direction of much greater state intervention.

The process I have described obviously runs both ways. A movement in the direction of a collectivist society involves increased governmental intervention into the daily lives of people and the conversion into crimes of actions that are regarded by the ordinary person as entirely proper. These tend in turn to undermine respect for the law and to give incentives to corrupt state officials. There can, I think, be little doubt that this process has begun in Britain and has gone a substantial distance. Although respect for the law may still be greater than it is here, most observers would agree that respect for the law in Britain has gone down decidedly in the course of the last twenty or thirty years, certainly since the war, as a result of the kind of laws people have been asked to obey. On the occasions I have been in England, I have

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had access to two sources of information that generally yield quite different answers. One is people associated with academic institutions, all of whom are quite shocked at the idea that any British citizen might evade the law — except perhaps for transactions involving exchanging pounds for dollars when exchange control was in effect. It also happens that I had contact with people engaged in small businesses. They tell a rather different story, and one that I suspect comes closer to being valid, about the extent to which regulations were honored in the breach, and taxes and customs regulations evaded — the one thing that is uniform among people or almost uniform is that nobody or almost nobody has any moral repugnance to smuggling, and certainly not when he is smuggling something into some country other than his own.

The erosion of the capital stock of willingness to obey the law reduces the capacity of a society to run a centralized state, to move away from freedom. This effect on law obedience is thus one that is reversible and runs in both directions. It is another major factor that needs to be taken into account in judging the likely stability of a free system in the long run.

I HAVE BEEN EMPHASIZING forces and approaches that are mostly pessimistic in terms of our values in the sense that most of them are reasons why a free society is likely to be unstable and to change into a collectivist system. I should like therefore to turn to some of the tendencies that may operate in the other direction.

What are the sources of strength for a free society that may help to maintain it? One of the major sources of strength is the tendency for extension of economic intervention in a wide range of areas to interfere directly and clearly with political liberty and thus to make people aware of the conflict between the two. This has been the course of events in Great Britain after the war and in many other countries. I need not repeat or dwell on this point.

A second source of strength is one that has already been suggested by my comments on law obedience. In many ways, perhaps the major hope for a free society is precisely that feature in a free society which makes it so efficient and productive in its economic activity; namely, the ingenuity of millions of people, each of whom is trying to further his own interest, in part by finding ways to get around state regulation. If I may refer to my own casual observation of Britain and France a few years after the war, the impression that I formed on the the basis of very little evidence but that seemed to me to be supported by further examination was that Britain at the time was being economically strangled by the law obedience of her citizens while France was being saved by the existence of the black market. The price system is a most effective and efficient system for organizing resources. So long as people try to make it operate, it can surmount a lot of problems. There is the famous story about the man who wrote a letter to Adam Smith, saying that some policy or other was going to be the ruin of England. And Adam Smith, as I understand the story, wrote back and said, "Young man, there is a lot of ruin in a nation."

This seems to me an important point. Once government embarks on intervention into and regulation of private activities, this establishes an incentive for large numbers of individuals to use their ingenuity to find ways to get around the government regulations. One result is that there appears to be a lot more regulation than there really is. Another is that the time and energy of government officials is increasingly taken up with the need to plug the holes in the regulations that the citizens are finding, creating, and exploiting. From this point of view, Parkinson's law about the growth of bureaucracy without a corresponding growth of output may be a favorable feature for the maintenance of a free society. An efficient governmental organization and not an inefficient one is almost surely the greater threat to a free society. One of the virtues of a free society is precisely that the market tends to be a more efficient

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organizing principle than centralized direction. Centralized direction in this way is always having to fight something of a losing battle.

Very closely related to this point and perhaps only another aspect of it is the difference between the "visibility" of monopolistic action whether governmental or private and of actions through the market. When people are acting through the market, millions of people are engaging in activities in a variety of ways that are highly impersonal, not very well recognized, and almost none of which attracts attention. On the other hand, governmental actions, and this is equally true of actions by private monopolies, whether of labor or industry, tend to be conducted by persons who get into the headlines, to attract notice. I have often conducted the experiment of asking people to list the major industries in the United States. In many ways, the question is a foolish one because there is no clear definition of industry. Yet people have some concept of industry and the interesting thing is that the result is always very similar. People always list those industries in which there is a high degree of concentration. They list the automobile industry, never the garment industry, although the garment industry is far larger by any economic measure than the automobile industry. I have never had anybody list the industry of providing domestic service although it employs many more people than the steel industry. Estimates of importance are always biased in the direction of those industries that are monopolized or concentrated and so are in the hands of few firms. Everybody knows the names of the leading producers of automobiles. Few could list the leading producers of men's and women's clothing, or of furniture, although these are both very large industries. So competition, working through the market, precisely because it is impersonal, anonymous, and works its way in devious channels, tends to be underestimated in importance, and the kinds of personal activities that are associated with government, with monopoly, with trade unions, tend to be exaggerated in importance.

Because this kind of direct personal activity by large organizations, whether it be governmental or private, is visible, it tends to call attention to itself out of all proportion to its economic importance. The result is that the community tends to be awakened to the dangers arising from such activities and such concentration of power before they become so important that it is too late to do anything about them. This phenomenon is very clear for trade unions. Everybody has been reading in the newspapers about the negotiations in steel and knows that there is a labor problem in the steel industry. The negotiations usually terminate in some kind of wage increase that is regarded as attributable to the union's activities. In the post war period, domestic servants have gotten larger wage increases without anyone engaging in large scale negotiations, without anyone's knowing that negotiations were going on and without a single newspaper headline except perhaps to record complaints about the problem of finding domestic servants. I think that trade unions have much monopoly power. But I think the importance of trade unions is widely exaggerated, that they are nothing like so important in the allocation of labor or the determination of wage rates as they are supposed to be. They are not unimportant — perhaps 10 or 15% of the working force have wages now some 10 or 15% higher than they otherwise would be because of trade unions, and the remaining 85% of the working class have wages something like 4% lower than they would otherwise be. This is appreciable and important, but it does not give unions the kind of power over the economy that would make it impossible to check their further rise.

The three major sources of strength I have suggested so far are the corroding effect of the extension of state activities and state intervention on attitudes toward the enforcement of the law and on the character of the civil service; the ingenuity of individuals in avoiding regulation; and the visibility of government action and of monopoly. Implicit in these is a fourth, namely the general

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inefficiency in the operation of government.

These comments have been rather discursive. I have been attempting simply to list some of the forces at work tending to destroy a free society once established, and tending to resist its destruction. I have left out of consideration the force that in some ways is our most important concern; namely, the force of ideas, of people's attitudes about values and about the kind of social organization that they want. I have omitted this force because I have nothing to say about it that is not self-evident.

No very clear conclusion can be drawn from this examination of the forces adverse and favorable to a free society. The historical record suggests pessimism, but the analysis gives no strong basis for either great optimism or confirmed pessimism about the stablity of a free society, if it is given an opportunity to exist. One of the most important tasks for liberal scholars to undertake is to examine this issue more fully in the light of historical evidence in order that we may have a much better idea of what factors tend to promote and what factors to destroy a free society.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP NIR . . .

During the past year, the circulation and staff of NEW INDIVIDUALIST REVIEW has been expanding rapidly. This journal is now being sold at many local newsstands and at over 40 colleges and universities. Despite a few dissenting notes, the general reaction of libertarian and conservative leaders has been favorable. The author of "The Conservative Mind," Prof. Russell Kirk, for instance, has said that NEW INDIVIDUALIST REVIEW is a work of "genuine intellectual power" and the editor of "National Review," William F. Buckley, Jr. has called it "by far the best student magazine on our side of the fence." If you agree that this is a useful magazine which ought to be read by more people, there are four things that you can do to further the growth of libertarian-conservative ideas.

(1) You can urge your college library or your local public library to subscribe. A library subscription makes an excellent donation since it may introduce the magazine to dozens of people.

(2) You can urge your friends to subscribe or to donate subscriptions to students.

(3) If you are a college student, you can volunteer to act as our representative on your campus.

(4) Our student subscription price ($1.00 a year) does not cover the cost involved; this price is purposely kept low to encourage as wide a readership as possible among undergraduates. Our deficit is made up by voluntary contributions from individuals. Any donation which you might be able to afford at this time would be gratefully received. None of our staff, by the way, receives any remuneration of any kind.

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An Opportunity for the Republican Party

HOWARD BUFFETT

THE ARENA WAS filled to overflowing. At the microphone the carefully-coached candidate was rolling out pleasant-sounding generalities. At each pause for breath, the crowd would respond with roof-raising cheers and stamping of feet.

At the back of the hall, two Yankees—visitors from the country-side—watched quietly. Finally one, puzzled by the performance, turned to his companion and demanded:

"What's he talking about?"

"He don't say," the friend replied, starting for an exit.

The humbug portrayed in the foregoing anecdote is standard performance today for both the New Frontier and the modern GOP. The result is that millions of voters are as puzzled and disgusted as the two Yankees who walked out.

At this moment in national affairs this conclusion may sound unwarranted. Recent months have recorded several striking conservative victories in Washington. Nevertheless, the bitter truth is this: that for 30 years we have been marched towards collectivism despite occasional repulses by conservative forces.

The Hon. Howard Buffett is a former Republican Congressman from Nebraska. In 1952 he served as campaign manager for Senator Robert A. Taft.

Why has this happened? For freedom-loving Americans the answer to this question transcends all other issues. The answer is not hard to discover once we recognize two political realities:

(1) Despite a sizable dissenting element, the Democratic Party has a definite political faith. That faith is collectivism — the Welfare State. Every measure that Party promotes is designed to give the government more power and contrary-wise to shrink the area of individual freedom.

(2) Since the 'thirties the Republican Party has had no coherent or recognizable political faith. When out of power it has occasionally brilliantly resisted the collectivist drive. But mostly it has collaborated with the Democrats in diminishing individual freedom, calling such action bi-partisan. Foreign Aid and Military Conscription are examples.

During the recent eight-year GOP administration the New Deal remained intact. While elements in the GOP stood for the principles of free individualism, the Party followed a me-too policy. This political perversion started many years ago. It first became evident when Wendell Willkie, a Democrat switch-over, was made GOP presidential nominee in 1940. In that campaign, both candidates, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie, promised to keep us out of for-

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eign wars. Yet both supported actions that would get us into the European war already raging. Me-tooism became the pattern of the Republican Party. Control of the GOP had been quietly seized by Eastern Internationalists who hold it to this day. In the two decades that followed 1940, political sterility characterized the Republican Party. Many factors contributed. The most obvious causes were global intervention and the gigantic expansion of government expenditures. This strategy enabled the Democrats to pose as world-saviors and at the same time scatter political or financial rewards to all who would become their lackeys — Repubican or Democrat.

By 1952 the Republican Party had been out of power twenty years. Desperate, it was determined to win at any price. What happened?

The GOP discarded their great leader of the difficult war and post-war years — Senator Robert A. Taft. Instead, they nominated General Dwight D. Eisenhower, candidate of the powerful Internationalists. He was elected President like war hero candidates before him — Zachary Taylor and Ulysses S. Grant. Freedom-loving Americans were assured collectivism would be halted — that swollen governmental power would be whittled down.

The 1952 GOP platform declared: "We charge that they (the Democrats) have arrogantly deprived our citizens of precious liberties by seizing powers never granted."

What happened? As Al Smith used to say, "Let's look at the record." In its first months the Eisenhower administration did achieve one commendable change. The sickening and senseless slaughter of American boys in Korea was halted. But in domestic affairs no serious effort was made to repeal a single New Deal measure.

By 1957, Norman Thomas, frequent Socialist candidate for President, was boasting:

> The United States is making greater strides toward Socialism under Eisenhower than even under Roosevelt, particularly in the fields of federal spending and welfare legislation.
>
> This program can be credited to President Eisenhower and is particularly significant because it is being done by a Republican administration.

In the 1958 elections, despite a GOP administration in the White House, Republican Congressional strength was thinned down to its minority status of the 1930's.

The 1960 election is probably fresh in your mind. Both platforms were full of bromides and pious platitudes. Both candidates had the okay of the Eastern Internationalists. Their debates showed their views were close together. The election of either was to advance collectivism, but the GOP would not collectivize the country as fast as the Democrats. Conservative Americans generally voted for Nixon. That was about the only way to protest the continuing socialist drive of the Democrats.

The foregoing is history. The question now is: Where do we go from here?

Three possibilities exist. (1) The GOP will be rebuilt into a genuine and respected party; (2) a new party will be formed and become effective; and (3) the forces favoring a totalitarian state will have only intra-party opposition.

Those are the alternatives.

The difficulties are sobering. But the American people can solve them if competent leadership is found. The primary requirement is an aroused people — determined to be true both to their heritage and to their children. They can make either alternative (1) or (2) come into reality. The preferable solution would seem to be a massive reformation by the GOP.

Both parties still give lip service to freedom. Consider these recent utterances:

> "I am here to promote the freedom doctrine," declared President Kennedy in one of his first messages to Congress.
>
> "THE GREAT ISSUE OF 1962— [is] . . . which party acts more effectively to preserve and enlarge human freedom?" declared a statement of Republican principles issued in June 1962.

The fact is that the lamps of American liberty have been going out, one by

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one. A recent tabulation shows nine important American freedoms have been wholly or partially lost in the thirty years between 1931 and 1961.

Not one of these freedoms was abridged by consent of the people. These freedoms were destroyed in Washington without resistance from either major party. Me-tooism reigned.

Yet the Republican Party was born and nourished to greatness on action for freedom. Organized in 1854, the GOP nominated their first presidential candidate in 1856, John C. Fremont. He lost. But something important happened in 1856. Consider these stirring words:

> The battle of freedom is to be fought out on principle. Slavery is a violation of the eternal right. We have temporized with it from the necessities of our condition, but as sure as God reigns and school children read, that black foul lie can never be consecrated into God's hallowed truth.[1]

This stand for freedom marked Abraham Lincoln's speech as he joined the Republican Party in 1856 — and broke with the Whig Party that had elected him to Congress and other offices.

The Republican Party stood firm against the spread of slavery. Was that highly controversial action politically unwise and impractical? "Yes," declared the experienced Whigs. A few years later, the Whig Party was only an unmourned memory.

The new-born Republican Party, with Lincoln at the helm, won the next presidential election — 1860. That victory was repeated in 10 out of 12 presidential elections in the half-century that followed — a record never equaled in American history. Taking a stand for freedom was not simply a righteous move — it was dynamic political action.

AMAZINGLY, AN ISSUE of actual physical freedom, as vital and fundamental as the infamous Negro slavery, exists in America today. Its abolition awaits a political party courageous enough to champion liberty as the Republicans did a century ago. I refer, of course, to the Old World evil of conscription, carried out here under the soothing label of Selective Service.

Today, all American boys, at eighteen, are registered into military conscription and become subject to physical bondage by the government. This occurs even before these boys are of age.

The grim aspects of this law have been obscured. But their awesome meaning has been spelled out by a long-revered scholar of the Constitution, the late Professor John W. Burgess of Columbia University:

> The power in the government to raise and employ conscript armies for, and in, foreign war . . . is the most despotic power which government can exercise. It can be so exercised, at any moment and on occasion created by government itself, as to sweep every vestige of individual liberty and put the last drop of blood of every man, woman and child in the country at the arbitrary disposal of the government.[2]

Sobering details of the Conscription Law are reported by Lewis B. Hershey, Director of Selective Service:

> Every young man must register with a local board of the Selective Service System on his eighteenth birthday or within five days thereafter. . . . A registrant who fails to comply with all his selective service obligations because he leaves the United States after his registration . . . becomes a violator of the Act and is subject to severe penalties prescribed in the Act.

The meaning of Hershey's statement is that every American boy, as he reaches the age of eighteen, goes into bondage. He must not leave the jurisdiction of U. S. military authorities except by their permission. In some respects, he may seem like a free person. He may be permitted to go to school, work, or loaf, but he is actually a captive in that his person and services are

[1] Spoken at Bloomington, Illinois, May 29, 1856.

[2] John W. Burgess, *Recent Changes in American Constitutional Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923).

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subject to military control for a period of years.

If his parents should emigrate to Canada, England or some other land, no law stops them. But their eighteen-year-old son cannot get out. He cannot leave America until the U. S. military is through with him. Then, if he is still alive, he becomes free.

Many objections can be advanced against the GOP facing up to this situation. Similar arguments were raised against Lincoln and the Republican Party when they talked against Negro slavery.

In its abolition of freedom, peacetime conscription overshadows all other collectivism and regimentation. When the American government conscripts a boy to go 10,000 miles to the jungles of Asia without a declaration of war by Congress (as required by the Constitution) what freedom is safe at home? Surely, profits of U. S. Steel or your private property are not more sacred than a young man's right to life.

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By a stand against the peacetime conscription of American youth, the Republican Party could again become the party of freedom. Without this action, pledges in other areas of American life have little significance.

Will the Republican Party seize this opportunity? Who knows? It would seem to be the GOP's best, if not only, hope for the future. The Democratic Party has preempted and permanently occupied the socialistic and collectivist position in American politics.

If America is again to have government "by consent of the governed," one party must offer the alternative position. That alternative is, of course, individual freedom and private enterprise. Lacking that choice, America will end up in socialism without a single, genuine, ballot-box opportunity to reject it. Remembering the glorious history of our political system and its fruits, a greater tragedy to the world is hard to envision.

All this is not to say that otherwise the GOP will be counted out immediately. Suppose it continues to dodge action for freedom? The stock market crash and the economic effects it portends may bring GOP gains this fall. But that respite would only postpone its last rites if the me-too pattern of the last 30 years continues.

A return to faith in freedom by the GOP would not solve all its problems. But that action is the decisive step to assure its future. Then, as it was for Lincoln and the GOP in 1856, victory and a rebirth of freedom would come into sight.

For political action that sets men free has proven the most dynamic force in all history.

In turn, the rededication of America to freedom could reverse the totalitarian tide now sweeping over the world.

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H. L. Mencken:

The Joyous Libertarian

MURRAY N. ROTHBARD

The extortions and oppressions of government will go on so long as such bare fraudulence deceives and disarms the victims — so long as they are ready to swallow the immemorial official theory that protesting against the stealings of the archbishop's secretary's nephew's mistress' illegitimate son is a sin against the Holy Ghost.

— H. L. Mencken

IT IS TYPICAL of American *Kultur* that it was incapable of understanding H. L. Mencken. And it was typical of H. L. Mencken that this didn't bother him a bit; in fact, quite the contrary, for it confirmed his estimate of his fellow-countrymen. It is difficult for Americans to understand a *merger* of high-spirited wit and devotion to principle; one is either a humorist, gently or acidly spoofing the foibles of one's age, or else one is a serious and solemn thinker. That a man of ebullient wit can be, in a sense, all the more devoted to positive ideas and principles is understood by very few; almost always, he is set down as a pure cynic and nihilist. This was and still is the common fate of H. L. Mencken; but it is no more than he would have cheerfully expected.

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Any man who is an individualist and a libertarian in this day and age has a difficult row to hoe. He finds himself in a world marked, if not dominated, by folly, fraud, and tyranny. He has, if he is a reflecting man, three possible courses of action open to him: (1) he may retire from the social and political world into his private occupation: in the case of Mencken's early partner, George Jean Nathan, he can retire into a world of purely esthetic contemplation; (2) he can set about to try to change the world for the better, or at least to formulate and propagate his views with such an ultimate hope in mind; or, (3) he can stay in the world, enjoying himself immensely at this spectacle of folly. To take this third route requires a special type of personality with a special type of judgment about the world. He must, on the one hand, be an individualist with a serene and unquenchable sense of self-confidence; he must be supremely "inner-directed" with no inner shame

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or quaking at going against the judgment of the herd. He must, secondly, have a supreme zest for enjoying life and the spectacle it affords; he must be an individualist who cares deeply about liberty and individual excellence, but who can — from that same dedication to truth and liberty — enjoy and lampoon a society that has turned its back on the best that it can achieve. And he must, thirdly, be deeply pessimistic about any possibility of changing and reforming the ideas and actions of the vast majority of his fellow-men. He must believe that *boobus Americanus* is doomed to be *boobus Americanus* forevermore. Put these qualities together, and we are a long way toward explaining the route taken by Henry Louis Mencken.

Of course, Mencken had other qualities, too: enormous gusto, a sparkling wit, a keen and erudite appreciation of many fields of knowledge, a zest for the dramatic events of the everyday world that made him a born journalist. Despite his omnivorous passion for intellectual fields and disciplines, he had no temperament for fashioning rigorous systems of thought — but then, how many people have? All these qualities reinforced his bent for what he became.

A serene and confident individualist, dedicated to competence and excellence and deeply devoted to liberty, but convinced that the bulk of his fellows were beyond repair, Mencken carved out a role unique in American history: he sailed joyously into the fray, slashing and cutting happily into the buncombe and folly he saw all around him, puncturing the balloons of pomposity, gaily cleansing the Augean stables of cant, hypocrisy, absurdity, and cliche, "heaving," as he once put it, "the dead cat into the temple" to show bemused worshippers of the inane that he would not be struck dead on the spot. And in the course of this task, rarely undertaken in any age, a task performed purely for his own enjoyment, he exercised an enormous liberating force upon the best minds of a whole generation.

It is characteristic of Mencken that one of the things he enjoyed the most was a Presidential convention, which he almost never failed to attend. Here he plunged into the midst of the teeming, raucous and absurd throng: into all the hilarity and inanity and excitement of the great American political process itself, his jacket off, swigging beer, partaking of all the fun while missing none of the folly. And then he would write up what he saw, slashing at the cant, hypocrisy, and concentrated nonsense of our governors in action. No one truly immersed in Mencken could emerge quite the same again; no one could retain the same faith in our "statesmen" or in the democratic political process itself, no one could ever be quite the same sucker for all manner of ideological, social, and political quackery, the same worshipper of solemn nonsense.

Mencken's liberating force, of course, was exerted not on the mass of men, but on the scattered but intelligent few who could appreciate and be influenced by what he had to say; in short, like his old friend and fellow-libertarian, Albert Jay Nock, Mencken wrote for (and liberated) The Remnant who would understand.

The style is truly the man, and not the least of Mencken's deeds of liberation was the shattering impact of his style. A scholar in the English — or the *American* — language, Mencken had a love for the language, for precision and clarity of the word, a deep respect for his craft, that few writers have possessed. It was not hyperbole when the eminent critic and essayist Joseph Wood Krutch referred to Mencken as "the greatest prose stylist of the twentieth century;" this, too, has gone unrecognized because Americans are generally incapable of taking a witty writer seriously.

The tragedy — for us, not for Mencken himself — is that most of The Remnant didn't understand either; the bulk of his supposed followers made the same mistake as everyone else in presuming wit and serious purpose cannot be joined; blinded by the wit, they did not realize the positive values which should have been evident in his work. And so those who happily joined Mencken in scoffing at Babbittry, at Prohibition and the Anti-Saloon League, at the wowsers and the Uplift of the 1920's, abandoned Mencken to enlist in the ranks of the

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intensified Uplift and the more extravagant wowsers of the 1930's. The very scorners of the politicians and political nostrums of the 'twenties, promptly and fiercely subscribed to the far more pernicious nostrums of the political quacks of the New Deal. The same Menckenians who clear-sightedly saw the folly of America's immersion into World War I, beat the drums loudly and with no trace of humor or hesitation for the equal or greater folly of our entry into World War II. The failure of Mencken's would-be followers to understand his "message" (a concept he would have abhorred) certainly did not depress Mencken; it only confirmed him in his judgment of the pervasiveness of the "boob-oisie." But it was a calamity for the country.

If Mencken was not a nihilist, what positive values did he hold? His values included a devoted dedication to his craft — to his work as editor, journalist, linguist. This in turn reflected his thorough-going and pervasive individualism, with its corollary devotion to individual excellence and to individual liberty. They included a life-long passion for music. They included a perhaps excessive zeal for science, the scientific method, and medical orthodoxy; along with the zeal for science came a mechanistic type of determinism which undoubtedly helped to shape his pessimistic view of the possibility of changing the ideas and actions of men.

Mencken's pervasive individualist *Weltanschauung* gave an unappreciated consistency to his views on many different subjects. It gave a system to his superficially piecemeal forays into innumerable fields. Let us take, for example, such a supposedly "non-political" field as folk-music. It is not accidental that both the Socialist Left and the Nationalist Right — those twin enemies of individualism — in our century have made a virtual fetish of the "people's" folk-song. Mencken cut to the heart of the matter in his inimitable review of Dr. Louise Pound's *Poetic Origins and the Ballad*:

> Dr. Pound's book completely disposes of the theory upon which nine-tenths of all the pedagogical discussions of the ballad and its origins are based. This is the theory that the ballads familiar to all of us... are the product, not of individual authors, but of whole herds of minnesingers working together . . . in brief, that the primitive balladists first joined in a communal hoofing, then began to moan and hum a tune, and finally fitted words to it. It is difficult to imagine anything more idiotic, and yet this doctrine is cherished as something almost sacred by whole droves of professors and rammed annually into the skulls of innumerable candidates for the Ph.D. Dr. Pound proves . . . that the ballads really did not originate that way at all — that they were written, on the contrary, by individual poets with talents . . . and that most of them first saw the light, not at vulgar shindigs on the village green, but at fashionable and even intellectual ale-parties in castle halls.
>
> The notion that *any* respectable work of art can have a communal origin is wholly nonsensical. The plain people, taking them together, are quite as incapable of a coherent esthetic impulse as they are of courage, honesty, or honor. The cathedrals of the Middle Ages were not planned and built by whole communities, but by individual men; and all the communities had to do with the business was to do the hard work, reluctantly and often badly. So with folk-song, folk-myth, folk-balladry. . . . German folk-song . . . used to be credited to a mysterious native talent in the German yokelry, but scientific investigation reveals that some of the songs regarded as especially characteristic of the folk-soul were actually written by the director of music at the University of Tubingen, Prof. Dr. Friedrich Silcher. . . .
>
> The English ballads are to be accounted for in the same way. Dr. Pound shows that some of the most famous of them, in their earliest forms, are full of concepts and phrases that would have been as incomprehensible to the English peasantry of Elizabeth's time as the Ehrlich hypothesis of immunity—that it is a sheer impossibility to imagine them being composed by a gang of oafs whooping and galloping around a May pole, or even assembled solemnly in an *Eisteddfod* or *Allgemeinesangerfest*. More, she shows the process of ballad making in our own time — how a song by a Paul Dresser or a Stephen Foster is borrowed

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by the folk, and then gradually debased.[1]

The myth of Mencken as a mocking nihilist has pervaded literary criticism; it was with surprise and much admiration, then, that the eminent critic Samuel Putnam read Mencken's great collection of short pieces — selected and edited by himself—the *Mencken Chrestomathy*. In a perceptive review, Putnam wrote that it was now evident that Mencken was a "Tory anarchist." "Tory anarchist" is indeed an excellent summation of Mencken's life-long world-view.

Mencken's guiding passion was individual liberty. To his good friend Hamilton Owens, he once solemnly declared: "I believe in only one thing and that thing is human liberty. If ever a man is to achieve anything like dignity, it can happen only if superior men are given absolute freedom to think what they want to think and say what they want to say. I am against any man and any organization which seeks to limit or deny that freedom . . . [and] the superior man can be sure of freedom only if it is given to all men."[2] At another time he wrote that he believed in absolute individual liberty "up to the limit of the unbearable, and even beyond." In a privately written "Addendum on Aims," Mencken wrote that "I am an extreme libertarian, and believe in absolute free speech. . . . I am against jailing men for their opinions, or, for that matter, for anything else."[3] And in a letter to one of his biographers, Ernest Boyd, Mencken wrote: "So far as I can make out, I believe in only one thing: liberty. But I do not believe in even liberty enough to want to force it upon anyone. That is, I am nothing of the reformer, however much I may rant against this or that great curse or malaise. In that ranting there is usually far more delight than indignation."[4]

The *Chrestomathy* contains some brilliant writing on what Mencken captioned as the "inner nature" of government:

> All government, in its essence, is a conspiracy against the superior man; its one permanent object is to oppress him and cripple him. If it be aristocratic in organization, then it seeks to protect the man who is superior only in law against the man who is superior in fact; if it be democratic, then it seeks to protect the man who is inferior in every way against both. One of its primary functions is to regiment men by force, to make them as much alike as possible and as dependent upon one another as possible, to search out and combat originality among them. All it can see in an original idea is potential change, and hence an invasion of its prerogatives. The most dangerous man, to any government, is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane and intolerable, and so, if he is romantic, he tries to change it. And even if he is not romantic personally he is very apt to spread discontent among those who are. . . .
>
> The average man, whatever his errors otherwise, at least sees clearly that government is something lying outside him and outside the generality of his fellow-men — that it is a separate, independent and often hostile power, only partly under his control, and capable of doing him great harm. In his romantic moments, he may think of it as a benevolent father or even as a sort of *jinn* or god, but he never thinks of it as part of himself. In time of trouble he looks to it to perform miracles for his benefit; at other times he sees it as an enemy with which he must do constant battle. Is it a fact of no significance that robbing the government is everywhere regarded as a crime of less magnitude than robbing an individual? . . .
>
> What lies behind all this, I believe, is a deep sense of the fundamental antagonism between the government and the people it governs. It is apprehended, not as a committee of citizens chosen to carry on the communal business of the whole population, but as a separate and autonomous corporation, mainly devoted to exploiting the population for the benefit of its own members. Robbing

[1] H. L. Mencken, *A Mencken Chrestomathy* (New York: Knopf, 1949), pp. 471-72.

[2] Guy J. Forgue, ed., *Letters of H. L. Mencken* (New York: Knopf, 1961), p. xiii.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

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it is thus an act almost devoid of infamy. . . . When a private citizen is robbed a worthy man is deprived of the fruits of his industry and thrift; when the government is robbed the worst that happens is that certain rogues and loafers have less money to play with than they had before. The notion that they have earned that money is never entertained; to most sensible men it would seem ludicrous. They are simply rascals who, by accidents of law, have a somewhat dubious right to a share in the earnings of their fellow men. When that share is diminished by private enterprise the business is, on the whole, far more laudable than not.

This gang is well-nigh immune to punishment. Its worst extortions, even when they are baldly for private profit, carry no certain penalties under our laws. Since the first days of the Republic, less than a dozen of its members have been impeached, and only a few obscure understrappers have ever been put into prison. The number of men sitting at Atlanta and Leavenworth for revolting against the extortions of government is always ten times as great as the number of government officials condemned for oppressing the taxpayers to their own gain. . . . There are no longer any citizens in the world; there are only subjects. They work day in and day out for their masters; they are bound to die for their masters at call. . . . On some bright tomorrow, a geological epoch or two hence, they will come to the end of their endurance. . . .[5]

Mencken had little faith in the ability of revolutions to effect an overthrow on behalf of liberty: "Political revolutions do not often accomplish anything of genuine value; their one undoubted effect is simply to throw out one gang of thieves and put in another. After a revolution, of course, the successful revolutionists always try to convince doubters that they have achieved great things, and usually they hang any man who denies it. But that surely doesn't prove their case." This blend of libertarian doctrine and pessimism on achieving it was summed up by Mencken: "The ideal government of all reflective men . . . is one which lets the individual alone—one which barely escapes being no government at all. This ideal, I believe, will be realized in the world twenty or thirty centuries after I have passed from these scenes and taken up my public duties in Hell."[6]

Mencken saw clearly the fallacy of treating government officials as uniquely motivated by the public weal:

> These men, in point of fact, are seldom if ever moved by anything rationally describable as public spirit; there is actually no more public spirit among them than among so many burglars or street-walkers. Their purpose, first, last and all the time, is to promote their private advantage, and to that end, and that end alone, they exercise all the vast powers that are in their hands. . . . Whatever it is they seek, whether security, greater ease, more money or more power, it has to come out of the common stock, and so it diminishes the shares of all other men. Putting a new job-holder to work decreases the wages of every wage-earner in the land. . . . Giving a job-holder more power takes something away from the liberty of all of us. . . .

Mencken goes on to add, on the nature of government and attempts to stem its incursions:

> It is, perhaps, a fact provocative of sour mirth that the Bill of Rights was designed trustfully to prohibit forever two of the favorite crimes of all known governments: the seizure of private property without adequate compensation and the invasion of the citizen's liberty without justifiable cause. . . . It is a fact provocative of mirth yet more sour that the execution of these prohibitions was put into the hands of courts, which is to say, into the hands of lawyers, which is to say, into the hands of men specifically educated to discover legal excuses for dishonest, dishonorable and anti-social acts.[7]

One of the major forces keeping governmental tyranny unchecked, Mencken pointed out, was the credulity of the masses of men: "The State is not force

[5] *Mencken Chrestomathy*, pp. 145-48.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

[7] H. L. Mencken, *Prejudices: A Selection*, ed. by James T. Farrell (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), pp. 180-82.

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alone. It depends upon the credulity of man quite as much as upon his docility. Its aim is not merely to make him obey, but also to make him want to obey."[8]

Is government sometimes useful? Answered Mencken:

> So is a doctor. But suppose the dear fellow claimed the right, every time he was called in to prescribe for a bellyache or a ringing in the ears, to raid the family silver, use the family tooth-brushes, and execute the *droit de seigneur* upon the housemaid?[9]

Neither did Mencken have any greater affection for the military caste than for the civilian bureaucracy:

> The military caste did not originate as a party of patriots, but as a party of bandits. The primeval bandit chiefs eventually became kings. Something of the bandit character still attaches to the military professional. He may fight bravely and unselfishly, but so do gamecocks. He may seek no material rewards, but neither do hunting dogs. His general attitude of mind is stupid and antisocial. It was a sound instinct in the Founding Fathers that made them subordinate the military establishment to the civil power. To be sure, the civil power consists largely of political scoundrels, but they at least differ in outlook and purpose from the military. . . .[10]

NO ONE EXCELLED MENCKEN in what he called "Utopian flights"—hilarious and magnificent projects for libertarian reform of government, or of society in general. Thus, in a piece written in 1924, before, as he put it, "the New Deal afflicted the country with a great mass of new administrative law and extra-tyrannical jobholders," Mencken proposed a searching reform in our system of administrative law. He begins by saying that "in the immoral monarchies of the continent of Europe, now happily abolished by God's will, there was, in the old days of sin, an intelligent and effective way of dealing with delinquent officials." Not only, he adds, were they subjects to ordinary criminal law, but *also* to special courts for "offenses . . . peculiar to their offices." Prussia maintained a court where any citizen was free to lodge a complaint against an official, and a guilty official could be punished in many ways — forced to pay damages against a victimized citizen, removed from office, and/or sent to jail. "Had a Prussian judge in those far-off days of despotism, overcome by a brainstorm of *kaiserliche* passion, done any of the high-handed and irrational things that our own judges, Federal and State, do almost every day, an aggrieved citizen might have hailed him before the administrative court and recovered heavy damages from him. . . ." Furthermore, the law "specifically provided that responsible officials should be punished, not more leniently than subordinate or ordinary offenders, but more severely. If a corrupt policeman got six months a corrupt chief of police got two years. More, these statutes were enforced with Prussian barbarity; and the jails were constantly full of errant officials."

Mencken adds that he does not precisely propose, "of course," the Prussian system for the United States:

> As a matter of fact, the Prussian scheme would probably prove ineffective in the Republic, if only because it involved setting up one gang of jobholders to judge and punish another gang. It worked very well in Prussia before the country was civilized by force of arms because, as everyone knows, a Prussian official was trained in ferocity from infancy, and regarded every man arraigned before him, whether a fellow official or not, as guilty *ipso facto*; in fact, any thought of a prisoner's possible innocence was abhorrent to him as a reflection upon the *Polizei*, and by inference, upon the Throne, the whole monarchical idea, and God. But in America . . . judge and prisoner would often be fellow Democrats or fellow Republicans, and hence jointly interested in protecting their party against scandal and its members against the loss of their jobs.

"What is needed," concluded Mencken, "is a system (a) that does not depend

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[8] H. L. Mencken, *Minority Report: H. L. Mencken's Notebooks* (New York: Knopf, 1956), p. 217.

[9] Mencken, *Prejudices*, p. 187.

[10] Mencken, *Minority Report*, p. 217.

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for its execution upon the good-will of fellow jobholders, and (b) that provides swift, certain and unpedantic punishments, each fitted neatly to its crime." Mencken's proposed remedy

> provides that any [citizen] . . . having looked into the acts of a jobholder and found him delinquent, may punish him instantly and on the spot, and in any manner that seems appropriate and convenient — and that, in case this punishment involves physical damage to the jobholder, the ensuing inquiry by the grand jury or coroner shall confine itself strictly to the question whether the jobholder deserved what he got. In other words, I propose that it shall no longer be *malum in se* for a citizen to pummel, cowhide, kick, gouge, cut, wound, bruise, maim, burn, club, bastinado, flay or even lynch a jobholder, and that it shall be *malum prohibitum* only to the extent that the punishment exceeds the jobholder's desserts. The amount of this excess, if any, may be determined very conveniently by a petit jury, as other questions of guilt are now determined. . . . If it decides that the jobholder deserves the punishment inflicted upon him, the citizen who inflicted it is acquitted with honor. If, on the contrary, it decides that the punishment was excessive, then the citizen is adjudged guilty of assault, mayhem, murder, or whatever it is, in a degree apportioned to the difference between what the jobholder deserved and what he got, and punishment for that excess follows in the usual course. . . .
>
> The advantages of this plan, I believe, are too patent to need argument. At one stroke it removes all the legal impediments which now make the punishment of a recreant jobholder so hopeless a process. . . . Say a citizen today becomes convinced that a certain judge is a jackass — that his legal learning is defective, his sense of justice atrophied and his conduct of cases before him tyrannical and against decency. As things stand, it is impossible to do anything about it. . . . Nor is anything to be gained by denouncing him publicly and urging all good citizens to vote against him when he comes up for re-election, for his term may run for ten or fifteen years, and even if it expires tomorrow and he is defeated the chances are good that his successor will be quite as bad, and maybe even worse.
>
> But now imagine any citizen free to approach him in open court and pull his nose. Or even, in aggravated cases, to cut off his ears, throw him out of the window, or knock him in the head with an ax. How vastly more attentive he would be to his duties! How diligently he would apply himself to the study of the law! How careful he would be about the rights of litigants before him![11]

Mencken's concern for the parlous state of liberty in America, and with the virtual immunity granted to its oppressors, was never expressed with more hilarity or bitter irony than in his article on "The Nature of Liberty"—written in the early 1920's but in no sense out of date. His theme is the police vs. the individual citizen. He begins in irony: "Every time an officer of the constabulary, in the execution of his just and awful powers under American law, produces a compound fracture of the occiput of some citizen in his custody, with hemorrhage, shock, coma and death, there comes a feeble, falsetto protest from specialists in human liberty." "Is it a fact without significance," Mencken continues, "that this protest is never supported by the great body of American freemen, setting aside the actual heirs and creditors of the victim? I think not." For the plain people understand that policemen are given night-sticks "for the purpose of cracking the skulls of the recalcitrant plain people, Democrats and Republicans alike."

It is clear, therefore, Mencken continued to spoof, that this minority of intellectuals concerned with civil liberty and individual rights as against the police are subversive and un-American:

> The specialists aforesaid are the same fanatics who shake the air with sobs every time the Postmaster-General of the United States bars a periodical from the mails because its ideas do not please him, and every time some poor Russian is deported for reading Karl Marx, and every time a Prohibition enforcement officer murders a bootlegger who resists his levies, and every time agents of the Department of Justice throw an Italian out of the window, and every

[11] Mencken *Chrestomathy*, pp. 384-387.

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time the Ku Klux Klan or the American Legion tars and feathers a Socialist evangelist. In brief, they are Radicals, and to scratch one with a pitchfork is to expose a Bolshevik. They are men standing in contempt of American institutions and in enmity to American idealism. . . .

What ails them primarily is . . . that . . . having mastered . . . the theoretical principles set forth in the Bill of Rights, they work themselves into a passionate conviction that those principles are identical with the rules of law and justice, and ought to be enforced literally, and without the slightest regard for circumstance and expediency.

They did not realize, added Mencken, that the Bill of Rights as originally

> adopted by the Fathers of the Republic . . . was gross, crude, idealistic, a bit fanciful and transcendental. It specified the rights of a citizen, but it said nothing whatever about his duties. Since then, by the orderly processes of legislative science and by the even more subtle and beautiful devices of juridic art, it has been kneaded and mellowed into a far greater pliability and reasonableness. On the one hand, the citizen still retains the great privilege of membership in the most superb free nation ever witnessed on this earth. On the other hand, as a result of countless shrewd enactments and sagacious decisions, his natural lusts and appetites are held in laudable check, and he is thus kept in order and decorum. . . . Once a policeman, he is protected by the legislative and judicial arms in the peculiar rights and prerogatives that go with his high office, including especially the right to jug the laity at his will, to sweat and mug them, to subject them to the third degree, and to subdue their resistance by beating out their brains. Those who are unaware of this are simply ignorant of the basic principles of American jurisprudence, as they have been exposed times without number by the courts of first instance and ratified in lofty terms by the Supreme Court of the United States.[12]

Mencken's devoted services to civil liberty, his opposition to censorship as editor of the *American Mercury,* are too well-known to need repeating here. But less known is Mencken's searching dissection of the myth of Mr. Justice Holmes as, in his dissenting opinions, a great civil libertarian. Mencken keenly pointed out that "it is impossible to see how . . . [Holmes' opinions] can conceivably promote liberty." It was misleading to consider Holmes an advocate of the rights of man; rather,

> he was actually no more than an advocate of the rights of law-makers. There, indeed, is the clue to his whole jurisprudence. He believed that the law-making bodies should be free to experiment almost *ad libitum,* that the courts should not call a halt upon them until they clearly passed the uttermost bounds of reason, that everything should be sacrificed to their autonomy, including, apparently, even the Bill of Rights. If this is Liberalism, then all I can say is that Liberalism is not what it was when I was young.[13]

Mencken had no particular interest in economic matters, but he saw clearly that capitalism, the consequent of individual liberty in the economic sphere, was the most productive and rational economic system. He bitterly opposed the New Deal for being anti-capitalist as well as anti-libertarian. Of capitalism, Mencken wrote:

> We owe to it almost everything that passes under the general name of civilization today. The extraordinary progress of the world since the Middle Ages has not been due to the mere expenditure of human energy, nor even to the flights of human genius, for men have worked hard since the remotest times, and some of them had been of surpassing intellect. No, it has been due to the accumulation of capital. That accumulation . . . provided the machinery that gradually diminished human drudgery, and liberated the spirit of the worker, who had formerly been almost indistinguishable from a mule.[14]

His old friend, Hamilton Owens, writes of Mencken's vehement anger at Roosevelt's taking America off the gold standard. "With all the vehemence of which

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[12] **Mencken, *Prejudices,* pp. 138-43.**

[13] ***Mencken Chrestomathy,* p. 259.**

[14] ***Ibid.,* p. 294.**

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he was capable he insisted it was downright robbery. He talked about taking court action in person."[15] In correspondence with the famous socialist, Upton Sinclair, who had evidently plied him with the old well-tested bromide on the supposed efficiency of government post offices, fire departments, public health services, etc., Mencken, instead of hastily retreating and compromising, as most conservatives do when faced with similar challenges, riposted:

> Your questions are easy. The government brings my magazine to you only unwillingly. It tried to ruin my business, [*The American Mercury*] and failed only by an inch. It charges too much for postal orders, and loses too many of them. A corporation of idiot Chinamen could do the thing better. Its machine for putting out fires is intolerably expensive and inefficient. It seldom, in fact, actually puts out a fire; they burn out. . . . The Army had nothing to do with the discovery of the cause of yellow fever. Its bureaucrats persecuted the men who did the work. They could have done it much more quickly if they had been outside the Army. It took years of effort to induce the government to fight mosquitoes, and it does the work very badly today.[16]

And, in a significant but forgotten review of the individualist Sir Ernest Benn's *The Confessions of A Capitalist,* Mencken wrote that Benn

> devotes most of his book to proving what the majority of Americans regard as axiomatic: that the capitalistic system, whatever its defects, yet works better than any other system so far devised by man. The rest of his space he gives over to proofs that government is inevitably extravagant and wasteful — that nothing it does is ever done as cheaply and efficiently as the same thing might be done by private enterprise. I see nothing to object to here.

And Mencken immediately adds:

> Even the most precious functions of government—say, collecting taxes or hanging men—would be better done if the doing of them were farmed out to Ford.[17]

The great individualist Albert Jay Nock has written that, while in the 1920's he was generally considered a flaming "radical," and in the 1930's as a bitter "reactionary," his political philosophy remained, in these decades, exactly the same. The same might be said of his friend Mencken, who also remained, throughout, an individualist and a libertarian. In the 1920's, Mencken directed his fire against the tariff and other special privileges to favored business groups, against laws and edicts against free speech and other personal liberties, and especially against the monstrous tyranny of Prohibition. In the 1930's, Mencken directed his major attacks against the major threat to liberty of that era: the New Deal. The former Menckenites of the 1920's and his newfound conservative champions of the 1930's, each, in believing that Mencken had now shifted from Left to Right, showed that they understood neither Mencken nor the principles of liberty. Often, what was mistaken for anti-capitalism was simply a cultural and esthetic distaste that Mencken had for the bulk of businessmen ("Babbitts") as persons — a distaste which they shared with the common run — the "mass-men"— of other occupations. But Mencken's antipathy to the cultural tastes of individual capital*ists* must not be confused — as he never did — with opposition to capital*ism* as such.

Looking back on the two eras as early as 1934, Mencken wrote to a friend:

> If I really believed that I had Left a Mark upon my Time I think I'd leap into the nearest ocean. This is no mere fancy talk. It is based on the fact that I believe the American people are more insane today than they were when I began to write. Certainly the Rotarians at their worst never concocted anything as preposterous as some of the inventions of the Brain Trust. They were

[15] Mencken, *Letters,* p. xii.

[16] *Ibid.,* p. 295.

[17] [H. L. Mencken], "Babbitt as Philosopher," *The American Mercury* (September, 1926), pp. 126-27. For a definitive bibliography of Mencken's writings, see Betty Adler, comp., *H. L. M.: The Mencken Bibliography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961).

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harmless fools, seeking to formulate a substitute for the Christianity that was slipping from them. But the Brain Trusters, at least in large part, are maniacal fanatics, and will lead us down to ruin if they are not soon suppressed.[18]

One of the delightful aspects of Mencken, indeed, is the constancy of his views. As he once, at the age of sixty, playfully wrote to a friend: "On all known subjects, ranging from aviation to xylophone-playing, I have fixed and invariable ideas. They have not changed since I was four or five years old."[19]

In his charming, mellow, affectionate, and witty autobiography on his life as a child, *Happy Days*, Mencken recalls imbibing his "reactionary" views at his father's knee:

> His moral system, as I try to piece it together after so many years, seems to have been predominantly Chinese. All mankind, in his sight, was divided into two great races: those who paid their bills, and those who didn't. The former were virtuous, despite any evidence that could be adduced to the contrary; the latter were unanimously and incurably scoundrels.
>
> He had a very tolerant view of all other torts and malfeasances. He believed that political corruption was inevitable under democracy, and even argued, out of his own experience, that it had its uses. One of his favorite anecdotes was about a huge swinging sign that used to hang outside his place of business in Paca street. When the building was built, in 1885, he simply hung out the sign, sent for the city councilman of the district, and gave him $20. This was in full settlement forevermore of all permit and privilege fees, easement taxes, and other such costs and imposts. The city councilman pocketed the money, and in return was supposed to stave off any cops, building inspectors or other functionaries who had any lawful interest in the matter, or tried to horn in for private profit. Being an honorable man according to his lights, he kept his bargain, and the sign flapped and squeaked in the breeze for ten years. But then, in 1895, Baltimore had a reform wave, the councilman was voted out of office, and the idealists in the City Hall sent word that a license to maintain the sign would cost $62.75 *a year*. It came down the next day.
>
> This was proof to my father that reform was mainly only a conspiracy of prehensile charlatans to mulct tax-payers. I picked up this idea from him, and entertain it to the present day. I also picked up his doctrine that private conduct had better not be inquired into too closely — with the exception, of course, of any kind involving beating a creditor.[20]

The firmness of Mencken's libertarianism may also be gauged by the numerous quotations from libertarian and even unknown anarchist authors in his *New Dictionary of Quotations*.[21] Thus, in his section on the "State," the great bulk of the quotations are anti-State, and the remainder are so extremely pro-State that the effect on the reader is emphatically ironic. An example of the latter is "The National Socialist party is the state — Adolf Hitler." And the anti-State quotations are taken largely from highly individualist or anarchist sources: Emerson, Max Stirner, Thoreau, Bakunin, William Graham Sumner, Kropotkin, Tolstoy, and Benjamin R. Tucker. It is doubtful if someone not highly sympathetic with these authors would (1) know their writings with such familiarity, and (2) "pack" such sections with their quotations. The section on "Speech, Free" is, again, almost exclusively filled with pro-free speech quotations, including not only Macaulay, Jefferson, James Mill, and various judges, but also the quasi-anarchistic English individualist, Auberon Herbert.

H. L. MENCKEN's contempt for democracy is well-known. It stemmed largely from his primary devotion to individual liberty, and his insight that the bulk of men — the democratic majority — is generally inclined to suppress rather than defend the liberty of the in-

[18] Mencken, *Letters*, pp. 374-75.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 444.

[20] H. L. Mencken, *The Days of H. L. Mencken* (New York: Knopf, 1947), pp. 251-52.

[21] H. L. Mencken, *A New Dictionary of Quotations: On Historical Principles from Ancient and Modern Sources* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

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dividual. Mencken once summed up his view of the nature of democracy, the common man, and the State in this eight-word definition of "democracy": "Democracy is the worship of jackals by jackasses." Other Menckenian definitions: "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard." "If x is the population of the United States and y is the degree of imbecility of the average American, then democracy is the theory that x times y is less than y." All of democracy's axioms "resolve themselves into thundering paradoxes, many amounting to downright contradictions in terms. The mob is competent to rule the rest of us — but it must be rigorously policed itself. There is a government, not of men, but laws — but men are set upon benches to decide finally what the law is and may be."[22] On democracy's inherent tendency to suppress liberty, Mencken wrote in a private letter:

> All appeals to any intrinsic love of free speech are futile. There is no such passion in the people. It is only an aristocracy that is ever tolerant. The masses are invariably cocksure, suspicious, furious and tyrannical. This, in fact, is the central objection to democracy: that it hinders progress by penalizing innovation and non-conformity.[23]

Mencken's atheism is, again, well-known, but for him passionate hostility was reserved for those religious groups which persisted in imposing their moral codes by coercion upon the rest of the population. In Mencken's day, the prime example was Prohibition: and therefore Mencken's hostility was directed chiefly toward the Methodists and Baptists. In contrast, Mencken had no particular animus against the Roman Catholics (especially the non-Irish sections): "Catholics are not Prohibitionists, they have more humor than the Methodists," he is supposed to have said once, and he was apparently friendly with quite a few members of the Catholic clergy.

The linkage in Mencken's thought between religious coercion of morals, democracy, the common man, and tyranny over the individual, may be seen in one of his most uproarious articles — his blistering attack upon the American farmer:

> The same mountebanks who get to Washington by promising to augment his [the farmer's] gains and make good his losses devote whatever time is left over from that enterprise to saddling the rest of us with oppressive and idiotic laws, all hatched on the farm. There, where the cows low through the still night, and the jug of Peruna stands behind the stove, and bathing begins, as at Biarritz, with the vernal equinox — there is the reservoir of all the nonsensical legislation which makes the United States a buffoon among the great nations. It was among country Methodists, practitioners of a theology degraded almost to the level of voodooism, that Prohibition was invented, and it was by country Methodists . . . that it was fastened upon the rest of us, to the damage of our bank accounts, our dignity and our viscera. What lay under it, and under all the other crazy enactments of its category, was no more and no less than the yokel's congenital and incurable hatred of the city man — his simian rage against everyone who, as he sees it, is having a better time than he is.[24]

Mencken's view of the hostility of the common man toward liberty was also expressed in his insight into the truly puzzling question: How did the overwhelming majority of conscripts manage to adjust so readily to the enslavement of Army life?

> All save a small minority of them came from environments a great deal less comfortable than an Army camp. . . . At one stroke they were relieved of that haunting uncertainty about subsistence which is the curse of all poor and ignorant young men, and also of all need to experiment and decide for themselves. They were fed and clothed at the public expense . . . and could engage freely in sports and other divertissements forbidden in their native places. Their lives, in brief, were not unlike those of the inmates of a well-run prison, but with . . . the constant expectation of release on some near tomorrow — not as

[22] *Mencken Chrestomathy*, pp. 167-68.

[23] Mencken, *Letters*, p. 109.

[24] *Mencken Chrestomathy*, pp. 363-64.

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wards of nosey cops and parole officers, but as heroes. . . . Not only did someone else decide what they should wear, where they should sleep, when they should get up and when they should go to bed, and what they should eat and when: all these accommodations were provided for them plentifully, and at no expense to themselves. In brief, the burden of responsibility was lifted from them altogether. . . .

The average soldier . . . found in the Army a vastly more spacious life, with many of the privileges of a chartered libertine. . . . If he did a little stealing it was one of his privileges as a savior of humanity. If he was rough and brutal it was a sign of his fighting spirit. Moreover, he could look forward to distinction and respect for the rest of his life, with a long list of special privileges. In every community in America, however small, there are local notables whose notability rests wholly on the fact that they were once drafted into some war or other. . . . Their general intelligence is shown by the kind of ideas they advocate. They are, in the main, bitter enemies of the liberty of the individual, and are responsible for some of the worst corruptions of politics. The most grasping of all politicians is the war veteran.[25]

Mencken, in fact, was an arch "isolationist" who bitterly opposed American entry into both World Wars I and II. He often remarked that he was opposed to intervention in both wars, but that if America *had to* intervene, it should have intervened on the other side. In April, 1942, he wrote jocularly to a friend: "The coming summer promises to provide Christian men with the best show seen on earth since the Crusades. I am looking forward to it with the most eager anticipations. I only hope that if the Japs actually take California they are polite to you."[26] And to his old friend Harry Elmer Barnes, Mencken wrote, in September, 1943, that "I am so constituted that I have to either Tell It All or stay silent altogether. In this war, as in the last, it seems to me to be most rational to save up what I have to say until it can be said freely."[27]

Mencken's reaction to the dropping of the atom bomb was understandably bitter. Two years after the event, he wrote to Julian Boyd that

> The atom bomb, I have long preached, is the greatest invention that Yahweh has made since leprosy. Certainly it has given great glory to the Christian physicists of this country. Try to imagine a decent cannibal throwing it on a town full of women and children.[28]

Mencken was particularly concerned with the well-nigh absolute suppression of civil liberties that seems inevitably to stem from participation in war, and in the conduct of World War I he saw the exemplar of his jaundiced view of democracy, the State, foreign intervention, and the common man. One of Mencken's funniest "buffooneries" was his proposal to decorate lavishly the "home front" heroes of World War I:

> What I propose is a variety of the Distinguished Service Medal for civilians . . . to mark off varying services to democracy. . . . for the university president who prohibited the teaching of the enemy language in his learned grove, heaved the works of Goethe out of the university library, cashiered every professor unwilling to support Woodrow for the first vacancy in the Trinity, took to the stump for the National Security League, and made two hundred speeches in moving picture theaters —for this giant of loyal endeavor let no 100 per cent American speak of anything less than the grand cross of the order, with a gold badge in stained glass, a baldric of the national colors, a violet plug hat with a sunburst on the side, the privilege of the floor of Congress, and a pension of $10,000 a year. . . .
>
> Palmer and Burleson I leave for special legislation. If mere university presidents, such as Nicholas Murray Butler, are to have the grand cross, then Palmer deserves to be rolled in malleable gold from head to foot, and polished until he blinds the cosmos. . . .[29]

There is no space here to discuss Mencken's other notable contributions — his dissections of Veblen, Wilson, and Theo-

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.
[26] Mencken, *Letters*, p. 463.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 476.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 501.
[29] *Mencken Chrestomathy*, pp. 601-05.

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dore Roosevelt, his being the first person to write books on Nietzsche or George Bernard Shaw, his. . . . But let it suffice to say that America desperately needs another Mencken, and that the reader should consider the above a tantalizing sample of Menckeniana to spur him toward more of the rich and copious product available. There is no better way of concluding than to turn to Mencken's noble and moving Credo, written for a "What I Believe" series in a leading magazine:

> I believe that no discovery of fact, however trivial, can be wholly useless to the race, and that no trumpeting of falsehood, however virtuous in intent, can be anything but vicious.
>
> I believe that all government is evil, in that all government must necessarily make war upon liberty, and that the democratic form is as bad as any of the other forms. . . .
>
> I believe in complete freedom of thought and speech — alike for the humblest man and the mightiest, and in the utmost freedom of conduct that is consistent with living in organized society.
>
> I believe in the capacity of man to conquer his world, and to find out what it is made of, and how it is run.
>
> I believe in the reality of progress.
>
> I ——
>
> But the whole thing, after all, may be put very simply. I believe that it is better to tell the truth than to lie. I believe that it is better to be free than to be a slave. And I believe that it is better to know than to be ignorant.[30]

[30] H. L. Mencken, "What I Believe," *The Forum* (September, 1930), p. 139.

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Individualism and Corporations

RICHARD W. DUESENBERG

A GREAT PARADOX OF AMERICA in the decades at midcentury has been the dual assumption that the inevitable corporateness of a growing and more complex society is evil, and that this evil can only be corrected by actions of the government. Acting as though the government were something other than collective coercion, politicians and public alike have ignored its invasion of our private lives as they have given it the power to clip the wings of some and to nourish the power grabs of others.

The whipping boy of the New Deal was big business. And it still is. A steady stream of "bright young men" from the colleges has been entering government service with the express purpose of doing as much damage as possible to an industrial complex that has provided the American people with the highest standard of living in the history of mankind.

In addition, much popular literature of recent years has devoted itself to deploring the conformity allegedly demanded by modern corporateness. This has been the theme of many best-selling novels and professors, clerics and journalists have taken up the cry—bemoaning the loss of individuality and the depersonalization of modern man. There may indeed be such a trend, but it is not necessarily because corporate activity is not individualistic. In this essay, I propose to analyze the ideas of individualism and corporateness and to make plain what I believe to be the sole preservative of true individualism.

Before denouncing or criticizing the corporate society, a fair-minded person ought to first analyze the nature of concerted action. We hear much these days about John Doe's being a mere number among many thousands in the Gary Steel mills. Yet, can one argue that the endless lines of flaming stacks and giant furnaces are in themselves an evil? They are inanimate objects, capable of performing only upon human direction; and they are a means of production which a heavily-populated world needs for survival. Insofar as they serve that purpose they are of positive value. Criticism of the corporate society must be more than a nostalgic brief for the pleasures of a former time. However, many and varied were the virtues of the agrarian past, and the task we have before us is that of carrying into the new age the best of the old.

To do this we must first be clear about what it is that we are trying to preserve; that is, we must define "individualism." This is not easy to do since the idea includes all of human personality. And yet, the very vastness and complexity of individuality is the strongest support for individualism as a political and economic creed. No single mind can know all of history, all of biology, all of the myriads of desires of a single person in any one

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of a multitude of circumstances, let alone all of these and more combined. Yet, it is the assumption that this is possible, or nearly possible, which underlies much collectivistic thought.

I regret that this vogue of planners and bureaucratic demagogues includes many college and university professors who seem either to miscomprehend freedom's heritage or to be obsessed with visions of themselves as administrative princes.

The best definition of the term that I know of is to be found in the writing of F. A. Hayek. Individualism, he says quite correctly, is a theory of society, "an attempt to understand the forces which determine the social life of man. . . . Its basic contention . . . is that there is no other way toward an understanding of social phenomena but through our understanding of individual actions directed toward other people and guided by their expected behavior." It contends further that the "institutions on which human achievements rest have arisen and are functioning without a designing and directing mind." In substance, Hayek's definition is that "individualism is freedom lived."

The primary point of this definition is, of course, the insistence on the genius of undesigned progress. A society of men, free to choose individually, and therefore free to make as many successes or failures as there are choices freely made, is definitely greater than the controlled society, limited to the powers and finite qualities of its collective controlling mind.

This does not mean that individualists are only concerned with the economic wastefulness of error on the part of the planners; they are even more concerned with the tragedies that occur when a brilliant man or a useful idea is left undiscovered by society because the "powers-that-be" were short-sighted or petty men. The defenders of freedom, of course, hold no brief for crackpots, but they permit crackpots to try out their ideas since they know that this is the only way we can insure that viable inventions will be introduced to society.

The amalgamation of the individual into a collective unit manifests itself in many ways and consequences. Organization is, however, a phenomenon consistent with the best traditions of freedom and individualism. It is patently obvious that most of what is considered materially beneficial would be unavailable without concerted effort and concentrated capital. It is important not to confuse organization *per se* with the depersonalization of the individual, for the individual choice to unite with others for a common achievement is as much a manifestation of individualism as is one's decision to go anything alone. This is so, at least as long as the joining is freely entered, free, that is, of a conscious coercion by a planning entity's commands. If the right not to join, or having joined, to withdraw, is reserved and implemented by legal sanctions, the propensity toward depersonalization is minimized. I do not believe it necessary to view a corporate society as necessarily destructive of or conducive to the breakdown of individualism. What is essential is a construction of a legal order which permits the manifestations of free choice, and which denies to any legal personality the absolute power to compel collectivism.

A *sine qua non* for maximization of individual choice is the formulation of principles upon which a society is to be constructed and the application of them to all units therein. The pragmatism of deciding each issue or case "on its merits" as an *ad hoc* proposition fails for want of a necessary ingredient of any good law, predictability. The alleged judiciousness of a society which does not feel itself bound to fixed principles is, in fact, not judiciousness, but simply a lack of principle, a drifting toward the point of not more, but less free will.

If we were to ask which characteristics of the Anglo-American legal system were most indispensable to individual freedom, we would have to head our list with the right to freedom of contract and the right to private property.

Many seem to be of the notion that private property and individuality are not necessarily related. Such a notion is preposterous, since neither can endure

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without the other. Some element of private property has existed in every known society, free and unfree, and the degree of freedom varies in direct proportion to the scope of private property rights. In view of this, it is startling that some theologians and parts of the organized church are among the antagonists, until, it should be noted, the deprivation comes too close to home (urban planning and the zoning off of religious institutions, for instance).

In his *Essays in Individualism,* Felix Morley has written that: "It would seem that those American theologians whose collectivism induces them to pick from anthropology what they think supports their view on the unrelatedness of private property to human nature, have not only falsified anthropological data but also by implication attack the universality of the family. It is significant that the only truly equalitarian communities in our present world, certain villages in Israel, operate under a system that keeps children from the day of birth until age eighteen in communal nursing homes with the express purpose of extirpating the notion of private property."

Most of what can be said for private property as a necessary prop of individualism can also be said of freedom of contract. Private property permits one to acquire, to keep, and to dispose. Freedom to contract permits contracting, acquiring the right to insist on the benefit contracted for or claim damages, or not to contract. Each enlarges the security of the individual to do as he will and is able, to acquire and keep what is legally his, a point worth bearing in mind when listening to the current suggestion that the choice of modern man is between freedom and security. Freedom is the best means to security. Sociologists often talk of the absolute security of a prisoner, when attempting a contrast of freedom and security. It is like saying a slave is secure. Secure he is, secured to the whim, caprice, love, hatred, fits and passions of his master, secured to his property, to the unappealable decision of his master to extinguish his life. The same is true of a prisoner, be he behind bars, or a member in a society where the dictatorship of the General Will prevails. To recall a perceptive quote of John Locke's: "For I have reason to conclude that he who would get me into his power without my consent, would use me as he pleased when he had got me there, and destroy me, too, when he had a fancy to it; for nobody can desire to have me in his absolute power unless it be to compel me by force to that which is against the right of my freedom, i.e., make me a slave."

The concept of a society, of course, does not rule out limitations on property and contract. The maximization of one's enjoyment from his property implies a restraint from injury to another's. Likewise, the right to contract means to contract voluntarily, free from coercion and fraud. An involuntarily entered contract is not, properly speaking, a contract at all. Contracts against public policy, such as not to marry, not to have children, in restraint of trade, to murder or to plot the destruction of another's rights, have never been recognized or enforced. A contract not to join a union while in a given employment might well be argued to be unenforceable, because it invades the choice of the individual employees. In the converse, a closed shop, the now illegal requirement to be unionized before employed, might be held to be unenforceable under concepts of free contract and property rights. Indeed, the compulsion to join a union after taking employment (the union shop as distinguished from the closed shop) might be illegal for the same reason. The authority given by the state to unions to monopolize the labor market is demonstrably responsible for the exaggerated corruption now infesting American organized labor, and it is as hideous an example of the degeneration of individuality as is conceivable. And why is it not recognized that the poorest excuse for the existence of anything, including a union, is the fact that it can perpetuate itself by the power given it through legislation, rather than the acceptance won by it in the operation of the marketplace? Because it is demonstrable that a religious rearing contributes substantially to the prospects of

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maturing into a well-disciplined adult, it is just as logical to argue that churches should be given the power to compel membership in them as a condition to receiving a public education.

The greatest threats to individuality, without a doubt, come from the government, either itself acting as agent to extract co-operation from individuals, or acting indirectly by giving to another the power to compel submission. If interventionist policies are looked at from a moral perspective, they are considerably inferior to the free and voluntary actions of society. There is no moral merit to support of social welfare if non-support lands the recalcitrant in jail. Morally, state intervention in social security, federal aid to education, subsidies, etc., however ornamented by glossy phrases of humanitarianism, are reactionary and retrogressive. And the growing galaxy of governmental paternalism poses a real threat to the multitude of privately sponsored organs of our society which have depended in the past on the voluntary charitable support of individuals choosing to further their objectives. It may well be that private education, like other private actions, and consequently the scope of available choices, will in time be starved out of existence because of the tax extortions which paralyze the source of support for concerted private action.

There are some areas of American law where individuality may still prosper almost without restraint. Free speech is staunchly protected by a whole line of Supreme Court cases. One of the paradoxes of the Court in the past several decades has been its singling out of some civil rights for shielding from state intervention, while ignoring or actually permitting others to be eroded away. Actually, such action can be explained by the almost Bohemian-like concept some people, usually collectivists, have of individuality. One such writer recently declared that:

> A final ambiguity in the problem of individualism remains to be faced. "Individualism" is used in American discourse, particularly in political argument, to refer to economic endeavor and enterprise. It connotes striving in some self-reliant and relatively unfettered (particularly by government) way for achievement and success, in short, the acquisitive urge. This notion is not identical with what we call "individuality"—the right to "be one's self," to develop one's own individual personality as far as possible according to one's own values and tastes, to be different, to be a non-conformist, to dissent from orthodoxy if one thinks it necessary, in short, the right to diversity.

Such a definition is blatantly shortsighted, indeed dishonest, if it does not include first and foremost the right to pursue the satisfaction of what the writer called the acquisitive urge. America has been the most individualistic country in history because of this right, and because the practical result of this right has been the widest conceivable assortment of goods with which each could satisfy to the best of his ability the pleasures he craved. I wonder seriously if the author learned his individualism by observing ONLY the incarcerated, the denizens of Greenwich Village, or the inhabitants of a Chinese commune.

Though organization may be inevitable, and may substantially alter the shape of things present from the past, it is not at all incompatible with individual expression. The task of modern man, if he is genuinely concerned with individuality, is to elevate to the status of an immutable moral principle the concept of individual freedom, by which is meant not equality, not happiness, not poverty, not unlimited choice, not security, not necessarily any or all of these, but the opportunity for each man to achieve his own ends, each in his own way.

When libertarians say that individualism should be made a matter of moral principle, they emphatically do not mean that this shall be the objective of society. The value of individualism lies in the fact that it encourages pluralism, thrives on dissent and permits the pursuit of all legitimate objectives while it resolves disputes as collisions of interests arise. It permits the pursuit of particular objectives by everyone, individually or collectively, without the coercion of state intervention.

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Conservatives, Cities, and Mrs. Jacobs[1]

JOHN WEICHER

FOR MANY YEARS, conservative political theorists and practical politicians, attempting to demonstrate the relevance of their beliefs to the twentieth century, have regularly run into the rebuttal, "But you don't have any solutions to city problems. What you say about states' rights or self-reliance, or individualism, used to be valid, but it isn't now when most Americans are living in cities and super-cities. What are you going to do about *them?*"

Conservatives and libertarians have seldom had an answer. Many of them tend to regard cities as things to be avoided; advocates of this view range from philosophers in solitary retreats to small-town politicians denouncing Big City Democratic Machines. Others have said the only problem is that conservatives just haven't tried to organize and sell their message in cities. This is true enough. But one reason they have not tried is that nobody has told the organization what to say; nobody has worked out implications of conservatism or libertarianism for cities. About the only talking point conservatives have had is that property taxes are too high. If they have opposed urban renewal, it has been because they don't like Federal intervention in local affairs, and they have offered no substitute plan for dealing with the obvious problems confronting our cities.

Although it was not her intention, Jane Jacobs has gone far toward providing conservatives with an urban program. Mrs. Jacobs says little about politics, and what she does say is not particularly conservative; she favors government subsidies for low-income housing, for example. But her politics are not important, and her book is. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* is permeated with conservative and free-market attitudes. As she castigates the planners of housing-project Utopias that leave no room for their inhabitants to make any plans of their own, one is reminded of Edmund Burke: "The nature of man is intricate; the objects of society are of the greatest possible complexity; and therefore no simple disposition or direction of power can be suitable either to man's nature, or to the quality of his affairs. When I hear the simplicity of contrivance aimed at and boasted of in any new political constitutions, I am at no loss to decide that the artificers are grossly ignorant of their trade, or

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1. A review of Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

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totally ignorant of their duty." Mrs. Jacobs says much the same thing. "City processes in real life are too complex to be routine, too particularized for application as abstractions. They are changes made up of interaction among unique combinations of particulars." Her whole book is an elaboration upon two themes: "Rome wasn't built in a day," and Burke's statement, "I must see the things, I must see the men." Mrs. Jacobs shows us the things and the men.

Diversity, she insists, makes a city or city neighborhood successful. The various components of this diversity support each other in creating liveliness. After an illuminating discussion of how city neighborhoods function socially, in which she establishes her case for diversity as a good thing, Mrs. Jacobs gets to "the most important part of this book," the four ingredients which generate it:

(1) A neighborhood must have two or more primary functions, in order that people are outdoors at different times for different purposes.

(2) It must have short blocks, so that streets are not isolated and the neighborhood can be knit together.

(3) It must have old as well as new buildings, in varying conditions.

(4) It must have a high density of population, both working and residential.

Each prerequisite — and almost every other statement in the book — is illustrated with examples from existing American cities, generally New York or others on the East Coast. I am inclined to wonder if Mrs. Jacobs' apparent greater familiarity with Eastern cities may not have led her into a few mistakes. For instance, she sets the minimum density for her fourth prerequisite at 100 dwelling units to the net residential acre, a figure which is higher than now exists in most of Chicago. Mrs. Jacobs herself points out that the very successful Back-of-the-Yards neighborhood in Chicago has a density of "well under" 100, which she explains by pointing out that it covers a larger geographical area than the usual mile and a half square of most neighborhoods, and that it is politically powerful and skillful. As on most other subjects, Mrs. Jacobs has interesting things to say about city politics, including examples of how to fight City Hall and how to get money for gradual redevelopment of a neighborhood (instead of being blacklisted by banks or subjected to huge projects financed by "cataclysmic money"). But she does not suggest any special reasons why other neighborhoods could not be as politically potent as the Back-of-the-Yards, even if they were also below 100 dwelling units per acre.

However, with the way population is growing in this country, this question may become academic quickly; cities may have to be as dense as Mrs. Jacobs desires simply in order to absorb people. In the Chicago area, huge apartment houses are being proposed for the North Shore suburbs, which now contain only single-family homes.

The one important factor Mrs. Jacobs leaves out is race and ethnic background. She is quite right in pointing out that successful and unsuccessful neighborhoods are not those which keep Negroes out and let them in, respectively. When whites with freedom of choice leave a neighborhood, something is wrong with it, and the lower-income Negroes (or whites) who move in are an effect and not a cause of failure. But this is not the whole story.

Mrs. Jacobs credits the unionization of the packinghouse workers living in Back-of-the-Yards with helping to overcome the old nationality antagonisms and creating an effective district. My own impression is that anti-Negro feeling also played an important part. In 1956, I worked in a packing plant during the summer, when the Democratic National Convention was held in the International Amphitheatre two blocks away. A few days before the convention, the United Packinghouse Workers of America held a rally during the lunch break, at which officials of the UPWA and NAACP spoke. I asked another worker after the rally what it was all about, and he said, "They told us to support Harriman because Stevenson was against the Negroes." He added, "If Stevenson is, he gets my vote." This man represented the general attitude in

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the neighborhood, I think; certainly he was representative of the plant. Of course, people want to preserve a neighborhood because they like it, and not just to "keep the Negroes out," but the latter motive can be a powerful catalyst in the process of preserving and upgrading a neighborhood. On the positive side, as Mrs. Jacobs admits, "strong city neighborhoods are frequently ethnic communities," because one factor which can promote a sense of community is a common ethnic background. A series of articles in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* in 1959, "Why Neighborhoods Stay Good," noted that several of the successful neighborhoods were composed almost entirely of one or another nationality group. Probably in time this factor will become less and less important, but it does not seem accurate to ignore it now.

CITY PLANNERS get a thorough going-over in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Mrs. Jacobs attacks the concept of public housing projects, which destroy neighborhoods and call attention to the poverty of their residents. She offers a proposal that, for those who support the idea of subsidized housing, is far more rational than 15-story prison towers and "grass, grass, grass." She also has some trenchant criticism of the accounting practices used in evaluating costs and benefits of public housing and urban renewal; a full accounting would include the losses of businessmen who are forced to leave the project area, being wiped out in the process and receiving next to nothing for their property. "They are subsidizing these schemes, not with a fraction of their tax money, but with their livelihoods, with their children's college money, with years of their past put into hopes for the future—with nearly everything they have. . . . The community as a whole has not seen fit to bear that whole expense, and it is never going to. Redevelopment officials and housing experts blanch when it is suggested. . . . Were the involuntary subsidies which make these schemes possible included as public costs, the enlarged public costs would bear no conceivable relationship to anticipated tax returns [i.e., increased taxes from the improved area].

This is a familiar story in public finance. The Army Engineers have been notorious for their fantastically inflated estimates of benefits for public works projects, but cost-benefit studies of individual projects by competent academic economists have started to push the Engineers toward more realistic accounting. Similar results might be expected from studies of urban renewal projects which included the losses of businesses wiped out by the project and other costs now overlooked, particularly real estate taxes, which are now not charged on public housing. If, as Mrs. Jacobs believes, the additional costs make urban renewal projects totally uneconomic, then those who advocate them should either base their arguments on non-economic criteria, or else drop the projects altogether; justification by false accounting is the least defensible alternative.

MRS. JACOBS also has written the finest short discussion of Metropolitan Government that I know of. She points out that city governments currently are unable to solve the problems of interdepartment communication, and that there is no point in creating still larger governmental units when the largest ones we now have are unfathomable bureaucratic labyrinths. What is needed is a system of geographic administrative districts within cities. In each district, locally, municipal services would be planned and coordinated, since it is on a local scale that most city planning is really carried out. The administrators of the police and other services would know their districts intimately; also, each district would be helped to function as a unit, politically and socially. Not all services could be so decentralized, of course, but many could be. I would be inclined to add one more to those Mrs. Jacobs mentions: schools, with locally-elected school boards. Mrs. Jacobs is critical of efforts to plan city neighborhoods on a basis of elementary school districts, but in Chicago, at least, the

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average public high school district contains about 80,000 to 90,000 people, which is just under her estimate of minimum effective district size. Schools can be effective means of unifying districts, particularly if local control is established.

I have mentioned just two of the areas in which Mrs. Jacobs clarifies a problem for us. In discussing automobiles, neighborhood parks, already-existing public housing, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* offers new ideas. Moreover, from the number of quotations taken from urban specialists, one gets the impression that the ideas have been gradually occurring to the professional students of cities, so that we may see a revamping of current city planning within a reasonably short period of time; Mrs. Jacobs is a pioneer, but not a solitary one. In parts she is synthesizing the work of other people who have mentioned some of the points she makes. And this is all to the good, because we ourselves, the city dwellers, have made the mess we live in. "It is so easy to blame the decay of cities on traffic . . . or immigrants . . . or the whimsies of the middle class. The decay of cities goes deeper and is more complicated. It goes right down to what we think we want, and to our ignorance about how cities work." "We have, therefore, no one to blame for this but ourselves." Mrs. Jacobs has given us new visions and new techniques for achieving them. It may yet be that conservatives can show they have something relevant to say about cities, and all of us will find that cities are not inherently unmanageable, and can be made fit to live in.

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Housing in Latin America, Public and Private[1]

SAM PELTZMAN

ALAN CARNOY DEVELOPED a successful home building business in the suburbs of New York City in the post World War II building boom. Since much of his building experience was concentrated in low priced homes, why not, he reasoned, apply this experience to the construction of homes for the rising middle class in Latin America; American building techniques had theretofore been almost non-existent in that part of the world. Thus it was that Carnoy American Building Corp. became Carnoy de Mexico, S. A. However, Carnoy soon found that there was more to duplicating American building techniques in Latin America than mere change of venue. In the U. S. he had had the benefit of a highly developed mortgage market and a relatively tractable legal system, both essential to large scale home development. In Mexico the situation was drastically altered. There he found extensive government interference, red tape, and an overly complex and ambiguous legal system, all of which encouraged an almost universal government corruption. Needless to say, such an environment had hardly been conducive to the development of a smoothly functioning mortgage market either. This same pattern, Carnoy found, was general in all of Latin America. Thus, to this day his plan for bringing the advantages of low cost privately owned homes to Latin America has hardly been a rousing success, in spite of the fact that a potential market for such homes does exist in all of the larger cities of Latin America.

This rather r u d e awakening has greatly affected Carnoy's policy proposals. He is deeply convinced that widespread home ownership in Latin America is both economically feasible and a potential a n t i d o t e to the spread of communism there. Therefore, he argues, it is in our own cold war interest to encourage the spread of home ownership. The basic hurdles to be overcome are, as just mentioned, excessive government regulation with its attendant red tape, archaic laws and corruption, and the lack of a highly developed market for mortgages without which widespread home ownership is impossible. We can do very little to change the former, but, Carnoy claims, we can do something to change the latter. If only

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1. A review of *Democracia — Si! A Way to Win the Cold War* by Alan Carnoy (New York: Vantage Press, 1962).

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our foreign aid authorities undertook a small program to provide loans to private home builders in Latin America at going interest rates and guaranteed against default of principal, we will have gotten the ball rolling. Once one sizeable project has been so financed and its success demonstrated, the Latin American governments will be encouraged to modify their laws and so encourage the growth of local capital markets for home construction; widespread home ownership there will become a reality, and Latin America will be safe for democracy.

One might, with much justification I would think, dismiss this out of hand as mere special interest pleading for a subsidy. However, I would prefer to deal with the proposal on its own merits and argue that it is not likely to accomplish Carnoy's objective. Certainly Carnoy knows better than I whether low cost private homes in Latin America are economically feasible or not, and neither will I quarrel with his premise, overly simple as it is, that widespread home ownership can be of assistance in the fight against communism. However, I am sure that Carnoy would agree that his objective can ultimately be realized only if the Latin American governments themselves remove the interferences, red tape and corruption which have heretofore retarded the growth of capitalist enterprise in home building as well as other industries. Indeed, Carnoy spends a good portion of his book chronicling the enormous potential and actual achievements of private enterprise in home construction (about which more below) and decrying the obstacles he found to private enterprise in Latin America. Yet, what would be an important result if his proposal became law? It would, even if initially successful, remove any incentive the Latin governments might have had to engage in needed reforms. The home builders, who might before have brought some pressure to bear on the local governments to relax restrictions on the free flow of capital, would now have that capital provided them on attractive terms from Washington. Why should they worry about the chaotic state of the local mortgage market? Indeed, given that this credit made home building easier and less costly, would not the government bureaucrats have an incentive to actually increase the red tape and so siphon off some of the *norte-americano* largesse in increased bribes? Of course, Carnoy sees this as only a small once-for-all project to "show the way." However, who can really believe that, with both builders and local politicians benefiting, it will remain so?[2] Also, it must be considered that the proposal would make land expropriation on the part of the Latin governments much more attractive than at present. With Washington guaranteeing the principal of the loan, the builder would lose nothing and the government gain the monthly mortgage payments by expropriating the developments. The ultimate result of Carnoy's proposal, it seems to me, can only be to encourage even more interference with the free flow of capital than now exists, and impose the costs thereof on the U. S. taxpayer.

IN CONTRAST TO the weaknesses of his major policy proposals, Carnoy is on far more substantial ground when he deals with the home building industry as he has known it. In fact, his chapter entitled, "Government Building vs. Private Building" is one of the best discussions of the subject I have ever seen. Here Carnoy employs his considerable knowledge of the economics of home building, public and private, North American and Latin American, and comes to one simple conclusion: "I do not see how [public housing] can ever be to the advantage of the majority of the people in any country." He backs this conclusion up with numerous references to his own experience with the monumental inefficiency of public housing. Consider, for example, Carnoy's experience with a public housing project in Westchester County, New York:

2. One recalls in this context that our domestic farm price support program was initiated merely to tide the farmers over the depression of the 1930's.

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> The (budgeted) cost of a 750 square foot (five room) apartment in this [public housing] project is $14,250. [I] can build an 800 square foot (5½ room) private home on a 50 x 100 foot lot for $9,000 (*including the land . . . and I did.*)[3]

Much the same story is outlined for Latin America. Yet, even given this fairly incredible waste of resources, what manner of product is it that the taxpayer is subsidizing? From the White Plains, New York project where a tenant confided to the author: "We all dream of getting out of here," to the French housing project which won a prize for design but was full of tenants complaining of the shoddy construction, to the Middle Eastern project devoid of any tenants, complaining or otherwise, because it had been built in the middle of the desert far away from the necessary utilities, the answer is the same — too little for too much. The reasons for the superiority of private over public building are stated so simply and succinctly by Carnoy that they deserve repetition here:

> 1. Private enterprise does not cost the country anything. An independent builder invests his own money, and when he borrows from the bank, he has to pay his loan back. When people buy his houses or rent his apartments, *they* will pay for them . . .
>
> 2. Private enterprise has a powerful master — the public. If the prospective clients don't like the location, they will not rent or buy. The prices are subject to public acceptance and competition, and this is the monumental factor in favor of the purchaser or the tenant.[4]

What then is the reason for the growth of public housing, inferior as it is? On this, Carnoy is quite blunt:

> I think that the political power which a government gets through housing is probably its primary reason for going into the building business.[5]

Carnoy details how, for example, in Latin America, favored labor unions get government credit while these same governments restrict the availability of credit to private builders, how space in projects is distributed on the basis of favoritism and bribery, etc. Using public housing as a means to political power has also had some interesting side results. Carnoy tells of the Venezuelan government's attempt to curry favor with the labor unions by building a public housing complex for them. This had the incidental effect of herding thousands of workers together in a central location where they could be effectively harangued *en masse* by left-wing agitators. The result was the Caracas riots of 1960.

In summary, the reader will find *Democracia—Si!* a curious mixture of noble sentiments far more difficult of attainment than the author realizes and well informed commentary on the realities of his own industry today, all embellished by a steady stream of anecdotes derived from a life far more varied than has even been indicated here. The book permits of no easy judgment, except that it recalls some of Adam Smith's remarks on the advantages of specialization.

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3. Italics mine.
4. Italics mine
5. To be sure, the desire for political power is not the only motive behind public housing. Another factor which Carnoy feels important is the collectivist mystique which is operative in the most well intentioned government planners: "Somehow, to a government official this word [housing] implies thousands of attached units rather than .. .. .. detached homes with gardens."

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NEW BOOKS AND ARTICLES

THE FOLLOWING IS A SELECT LIST OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE EDITORS, MAY BE OF INTEREST TO OUR READERS.

Martin Bailey, *National Income and the Price Level.* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962).

Paul Bakewell, Jr., 13 *Curious Errors About Money.* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Press, 1962).

George C. S. Benson, *et al., Essays on Federalism.* (Claremont, California: Claremont College, 1962).

H. N. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution.* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962).

Jeremy Bentham, *Handbook of Political Fallacies.* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962). Paper.

Paul V. Birdsall, *Versailles 20 Years After.* (Hamden, Connecticut: Shoestring Press, 1962).

Frank Chodorov, *Out of Step.* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1962).

Smith Hempstone, *Rebels, Mercenaries and Dividends: the Katanga Story.* (New York: Praeger, 1962).

Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Lord Acton.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). Paper.

William R. Kintner and Joseph Z. Kornfeder, *The New Frontier of War.* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1962).

John McCormick and Mairi MacInnes, *Versions of Censorship.* (Chicago: Aldine Press, 1962).

Francis J. Nock, ed., *Selected Letters of Albert Jay Nock.* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Press, 1962).

G. Warren Nutter, *The Growth of Industrial Production in the Soviet Union.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).

Claude Robinson, *Understanding Profits.* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1962).

Christian Rochefort, *Children of Heaven.* (New York: McKay, 1962).

George Rude, *Wilkes and Liberty.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

Francis Russell, *Tragedy in Dedham.* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962).

M. K. Singleton, *H. L. Mencken and the* American Mercury *Adventure.* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1962).

Lewis L. Strauss, *Men and Decisions.* (New York: Doubleday, 1962).

Philippa Schuyler, *Who Killed the Congo?* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1962).

Edward Bennett Williams, *One Man's Freedom.* (New York: Atheneum, 1962).

Dover Woodcock, *Anarchism.* (New York: Meridian, 1962). Paper.

W. F. Rickenbacker, "A Proposal for the Airlines," *National Review,* July 17, 1962.

George V. Taylor, "The Paris Bourse on the Eve of the Revolution, 1781-1789," *American Historical Review,* July, 1962.

Richard Weaver, "A Great Individualist," (Review of *The Letters of H. L. Mencken*), *Modern Age,* Spring, 1962.

Richard S. Wheeler, "Deliver Us from Evil," *Insight & Outlook,* Summer, 1962.

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NEW INDIVIDUALIST REVIEW has come a long way since we made the above promise to readers of our first issue, over a year ago. Our circulation has grown steadily with each succeeding issue. Students at campuses across the country have volunteered their time to make NIR available to their colleagues. We have readers in nearly every state and more than a dozen foreign countries. Our original staff of five editors has more than doubled; most of the new members are undergraduates who will ensure that NIR continues after the founders have left school. We are well on the road to permanence.

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Perhaps as important, NIR has brought libertarian and conservative ideas to a wider readership than its circulation. Articles have been reprinted in the "Wall Street Journal," the "Freeman," "Under Thirty," and other newspapers and magazines. We have been praised by other publications and individuals — the "Chicago Tribune," the "Portland Oregonian," "America," "National Review," the "New Republic," William F. Buckley, Jr., Russell Kirk, and Leonard Read, among them.

Articles have been translated into Spanish and published in Mexico and Venezuela. Professors at several colleges have requested permission to use articles for reading assignments in their courses.

In our first issue, we also said: "The NEW INDIVIDUALIST REVIEW has been founded in a commitment to human liberty. We believe in free, private enterprise, and in the imposition of the strictest limits to the power of government." If you share that belief, we invite you to subscribe to NIR, in order "to keep up with today's ferment of individualist ideas," and to help those ideas reach still more people. If you do not share it, we think you will find NIR stimulating and challenging, and perhaps persuasive.

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"SOCIALISM is only an idea, not an historical necessity, and ideas are acquired by the human mind. We are not born with ideas, we learn them. If socialism has come to America because it was implanted in the minds of past generations, there is no reason for assuming that the contrary idea cannot be taught to a new generation. What the socialists have done can be undone, if there is a will for it. But, the undoing will not be accomplished by trying to destroy established socialistic institutions. It can be accomplished only by attacking minds, and not the minds of those already hardened by socialistic fixations. Individualism can be revived by implanting the idea in the minds of the coming generations. So then, if those who put a value on the dignity of the individual are up to the task, they have a most challenging opportunity in education before them. It is not an easy job. It requires the kind of industry, intelligence and patience that comes with devotion to an ideal."

—*Frank Chodorov,* Founder and President, Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, Inc.

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